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(54) **ENHANCED CONTROLLER UTILIZING
RFID TECHNOLOGY**

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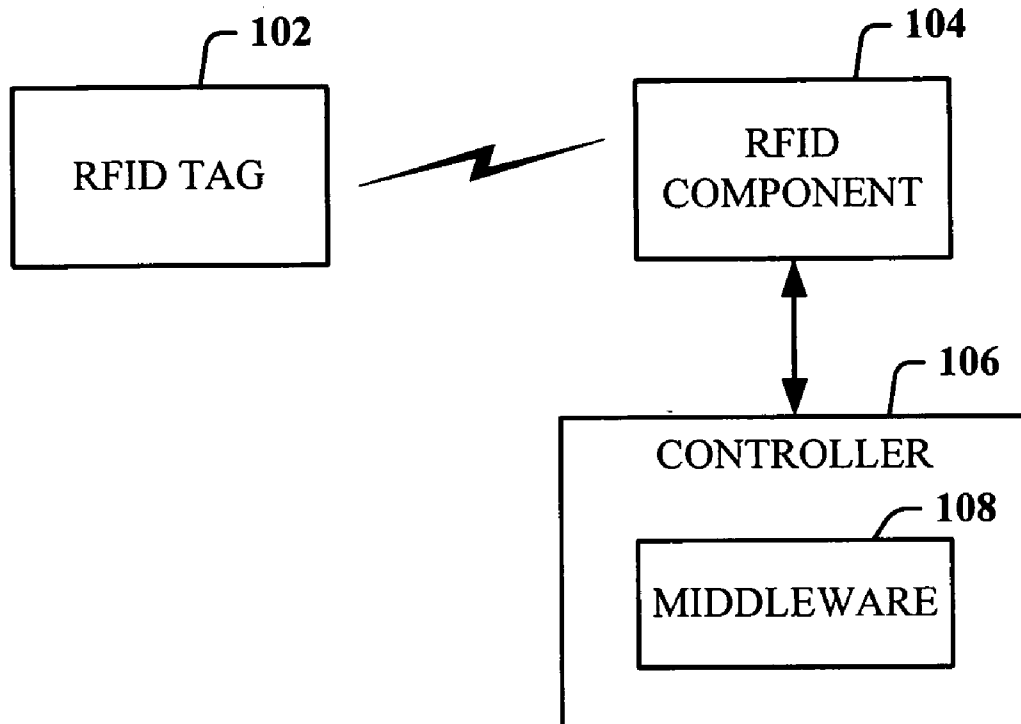
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A radio frequency identification (RFID) component receives a data stream from at least one RFID tag. A controller can integrate and/or embed at least one of the following, 1) middleware that filters the data stream associated with the RFID component, 2) RFID software that provides RFID component software functionality, and 3) a smart component that connects to the RFID component.



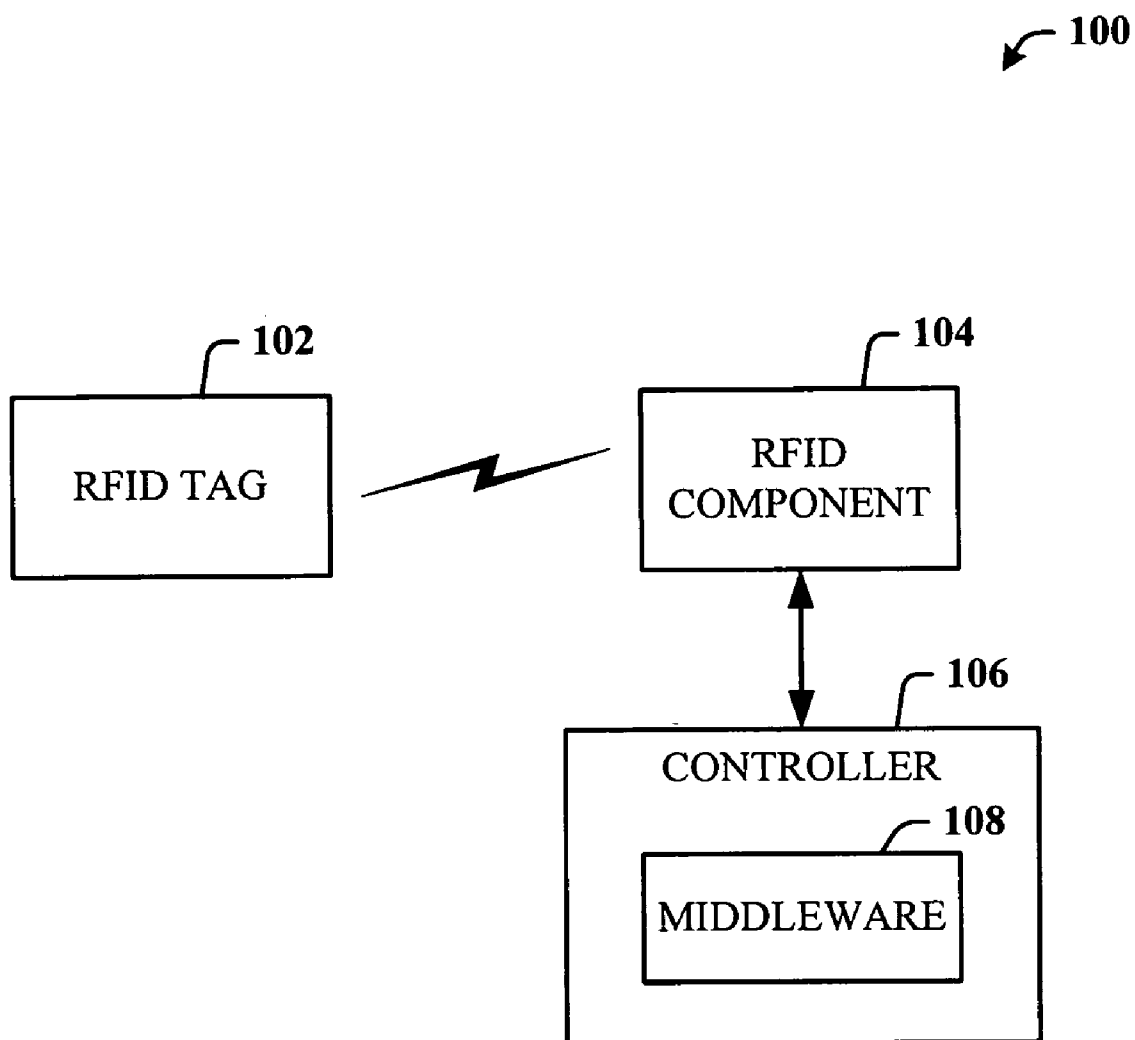


FIG. 1

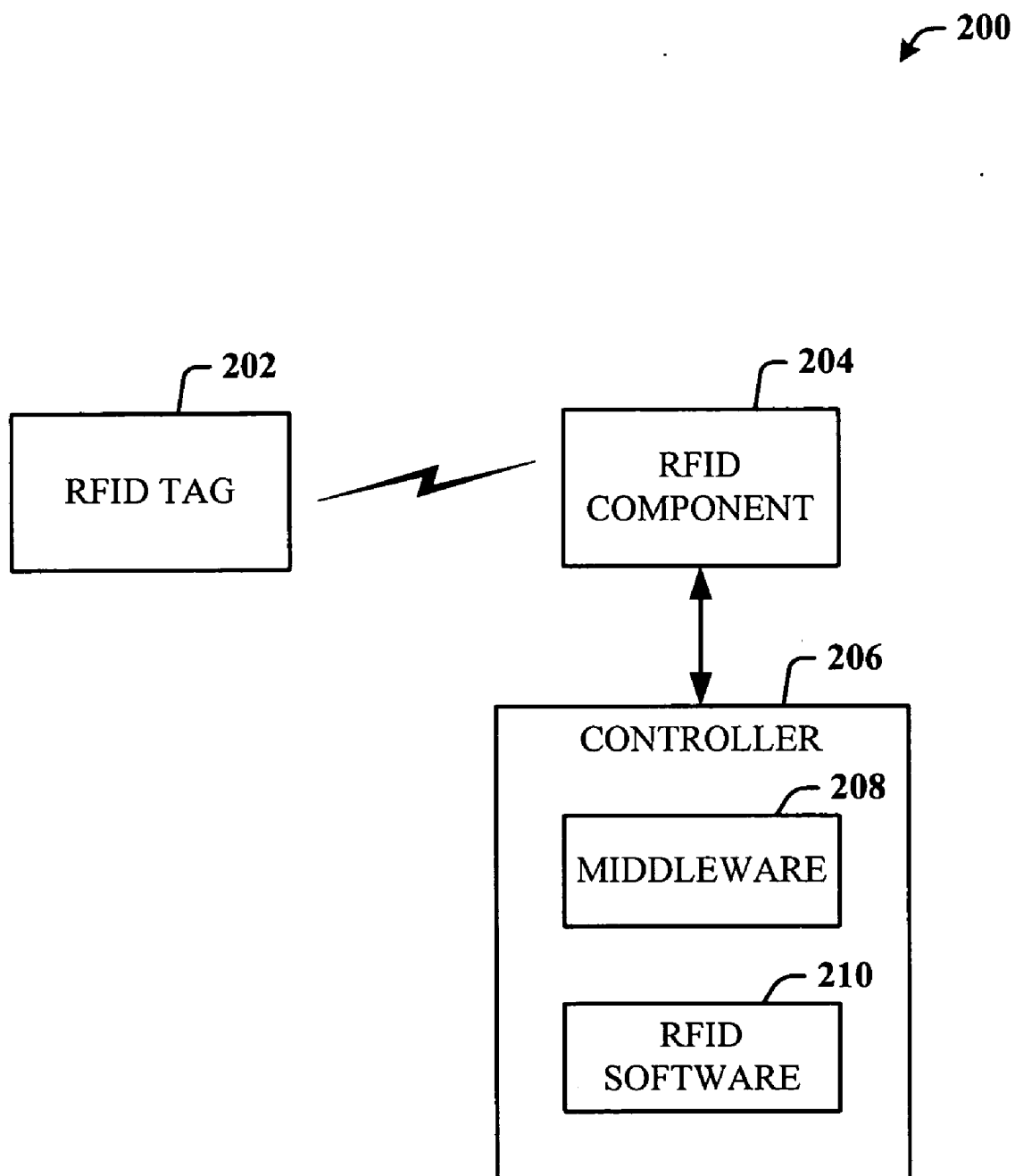


FIG. 2

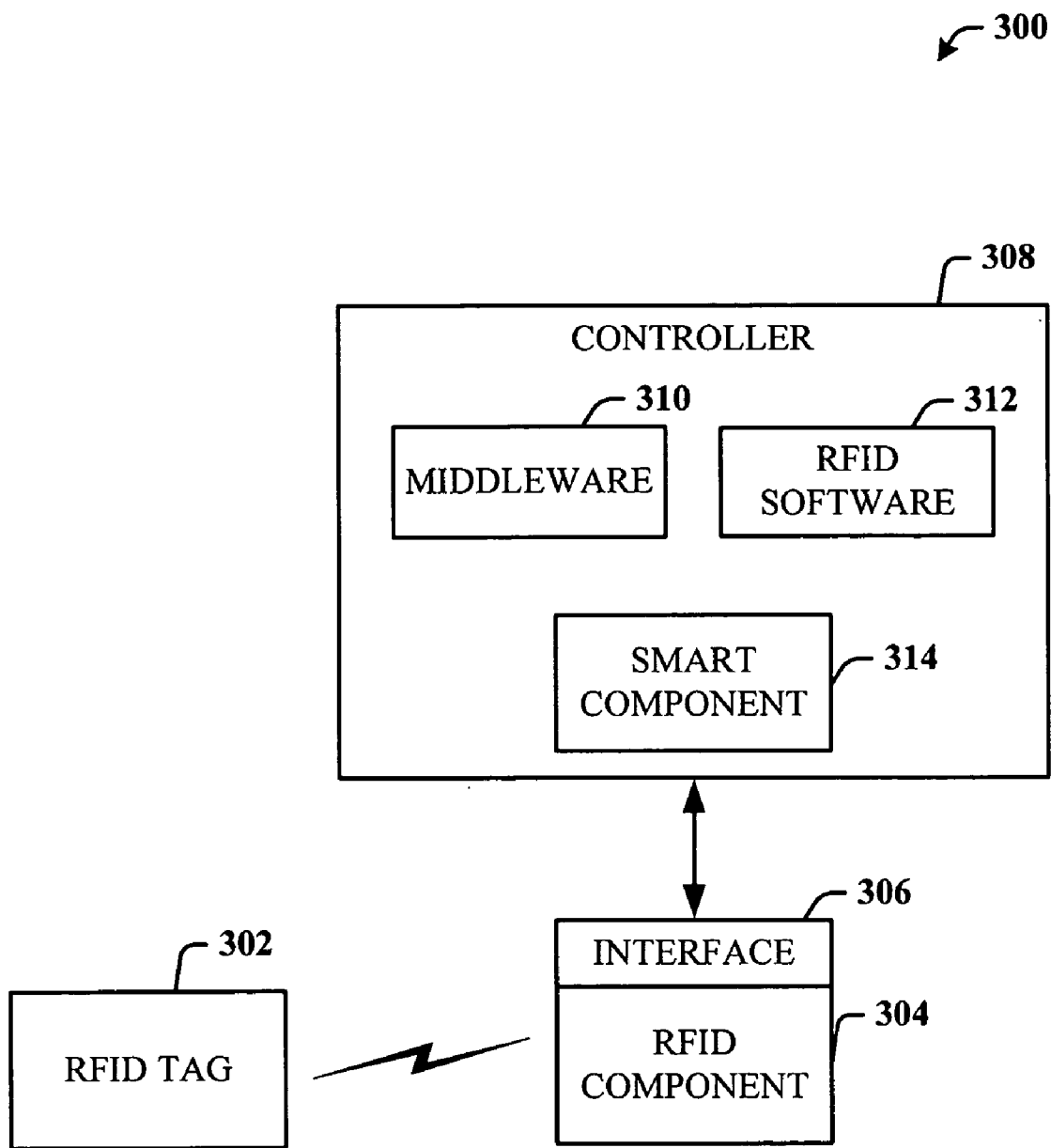


FIG. 3

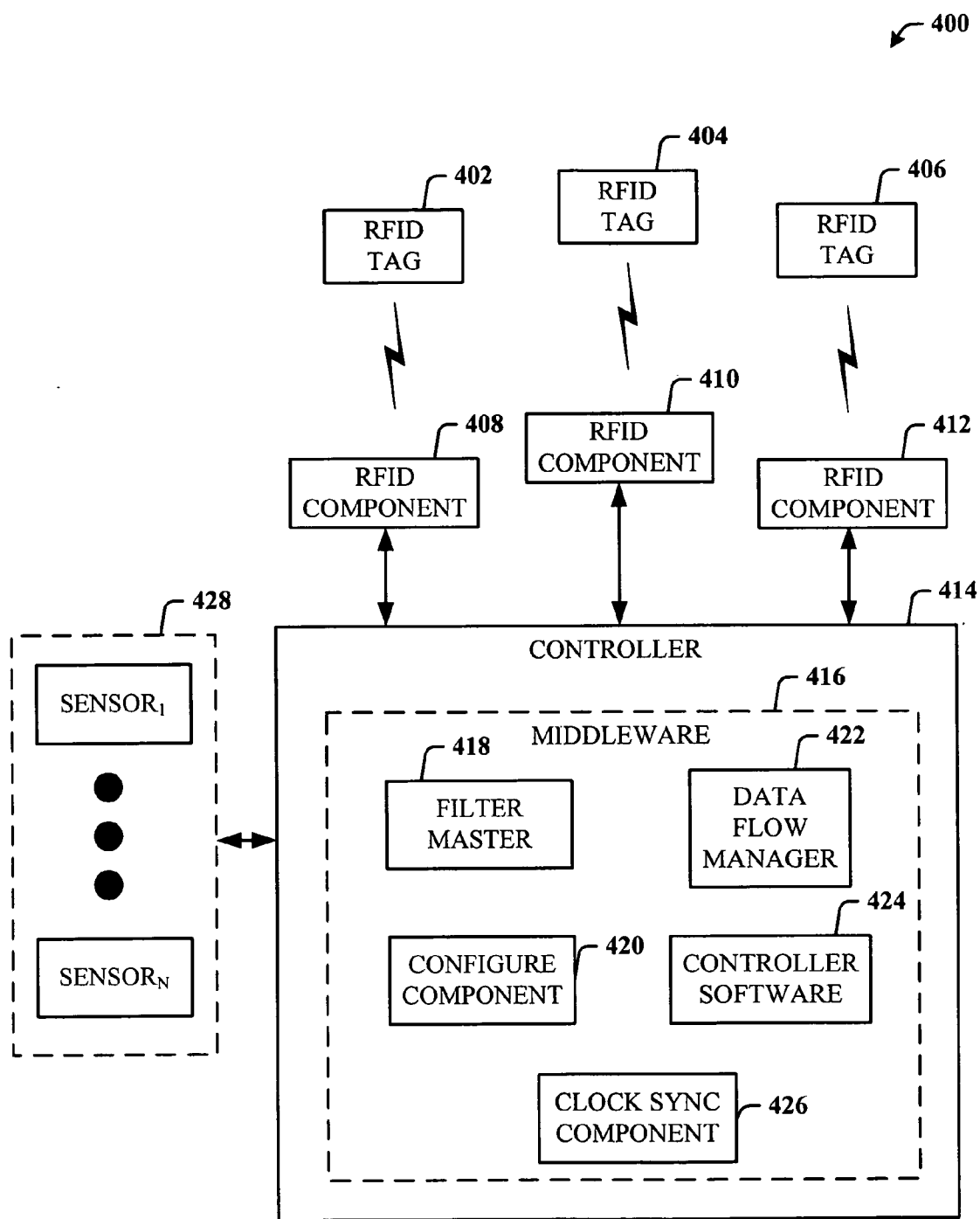


FIG. 4

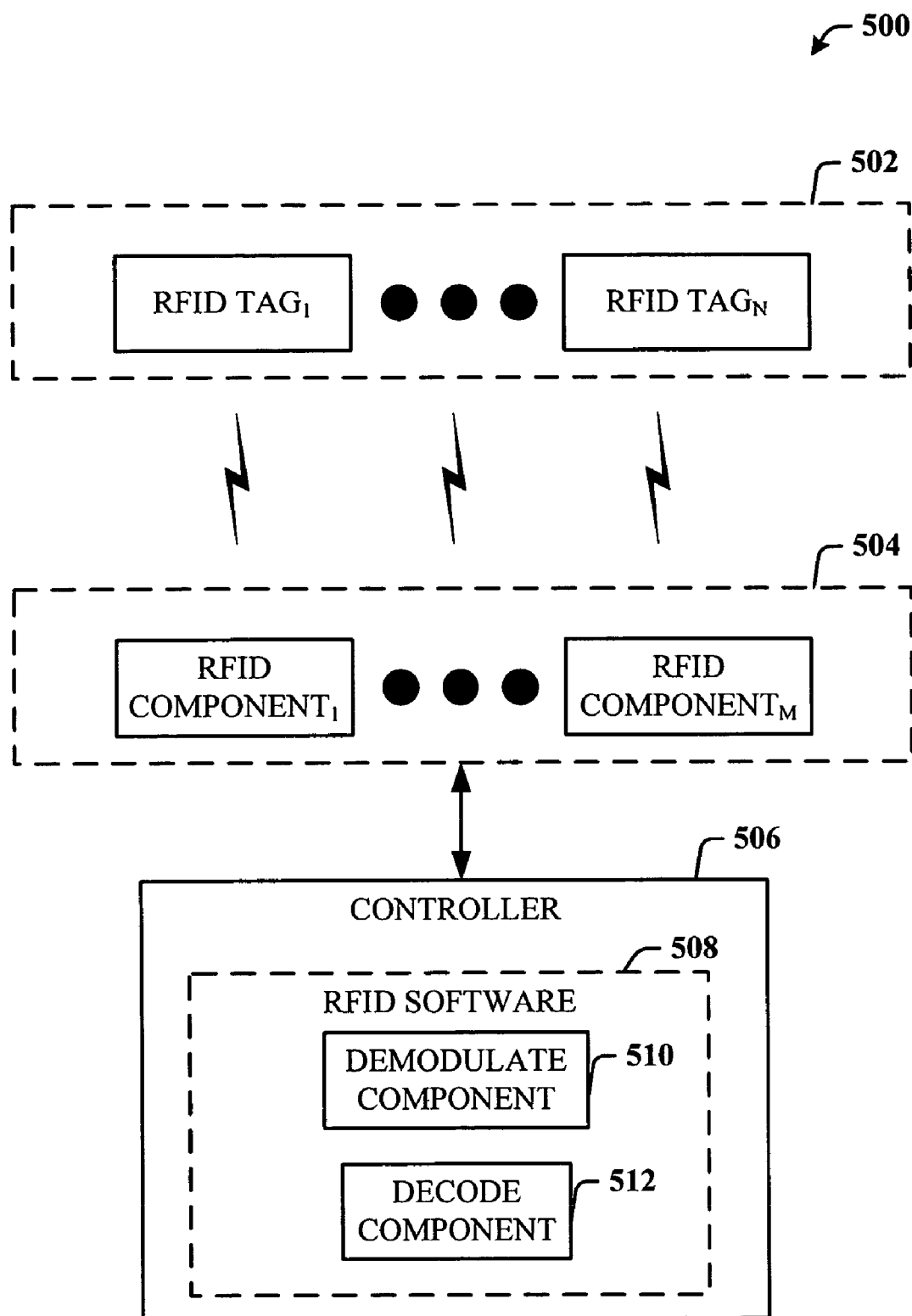


FIG. 5

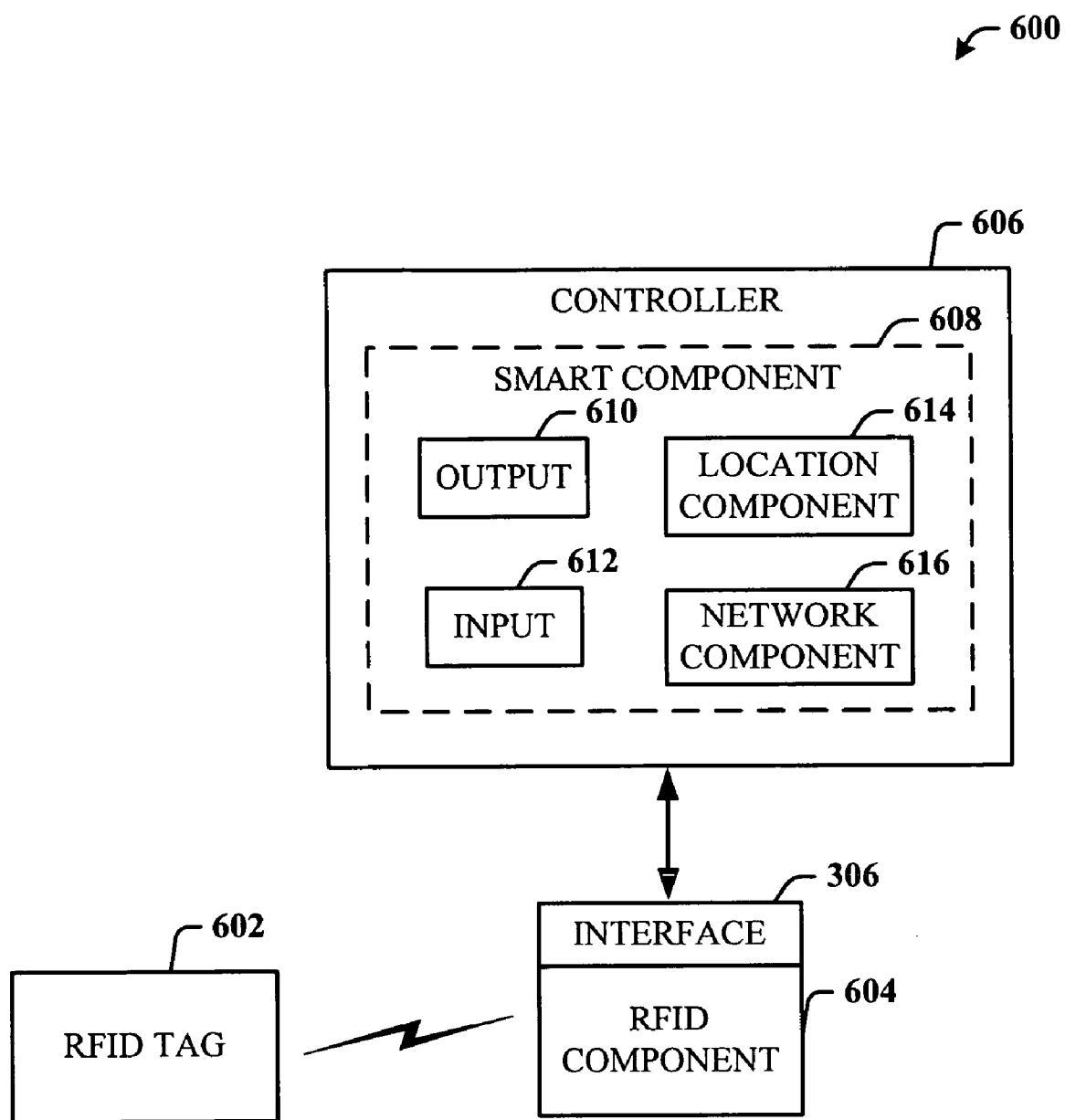


FIG. 6

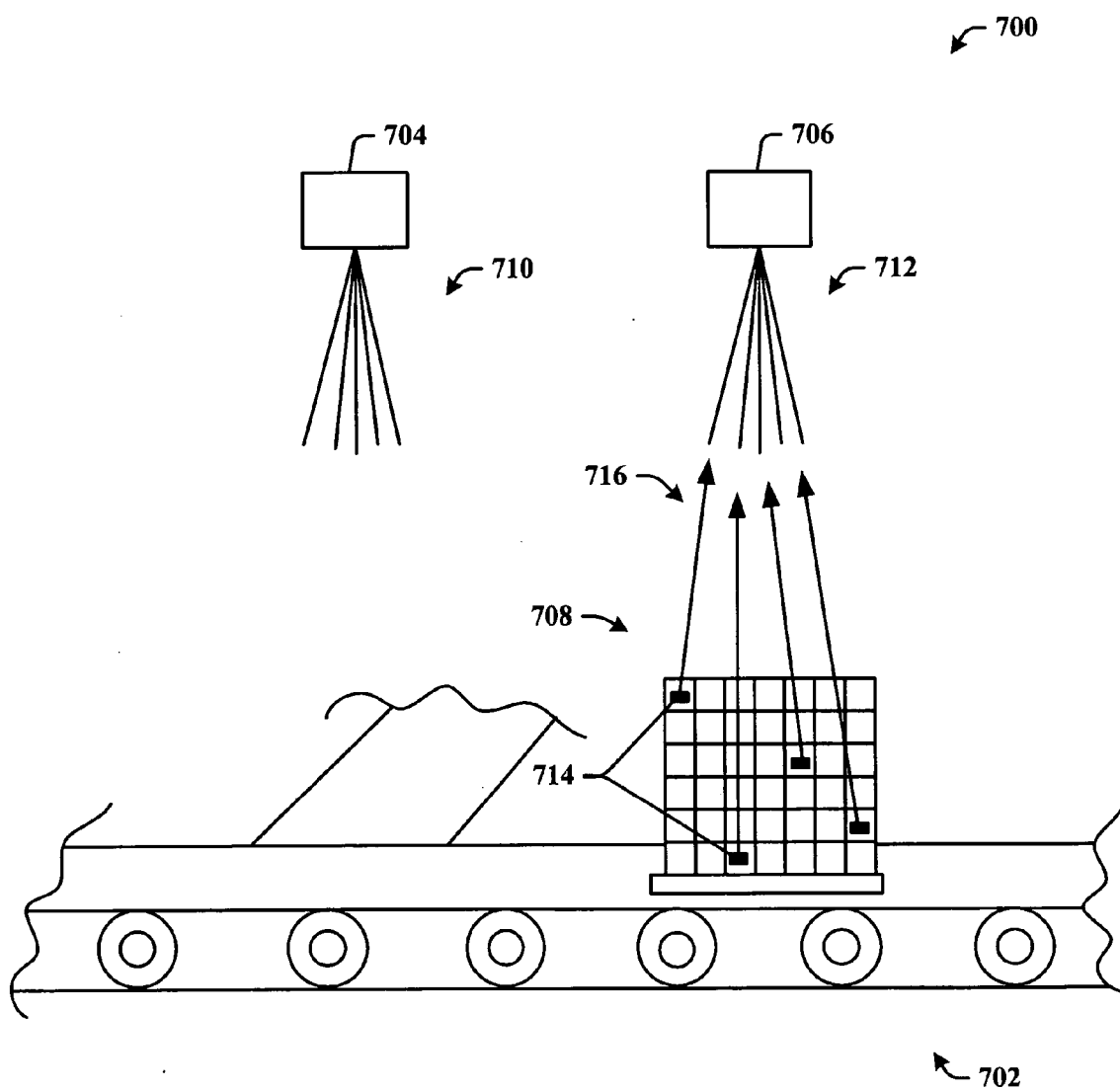


FIG. 7

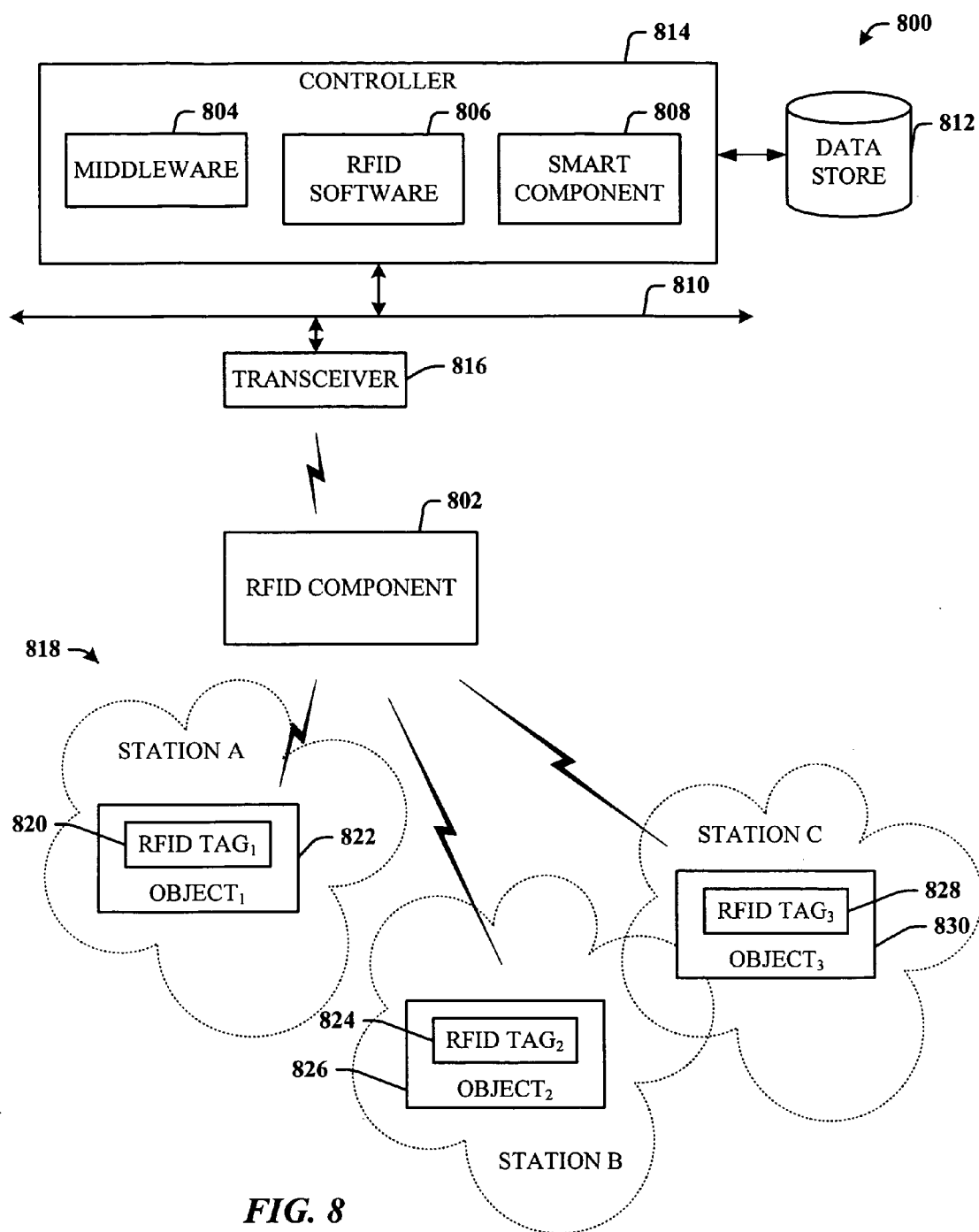


FIG. 8

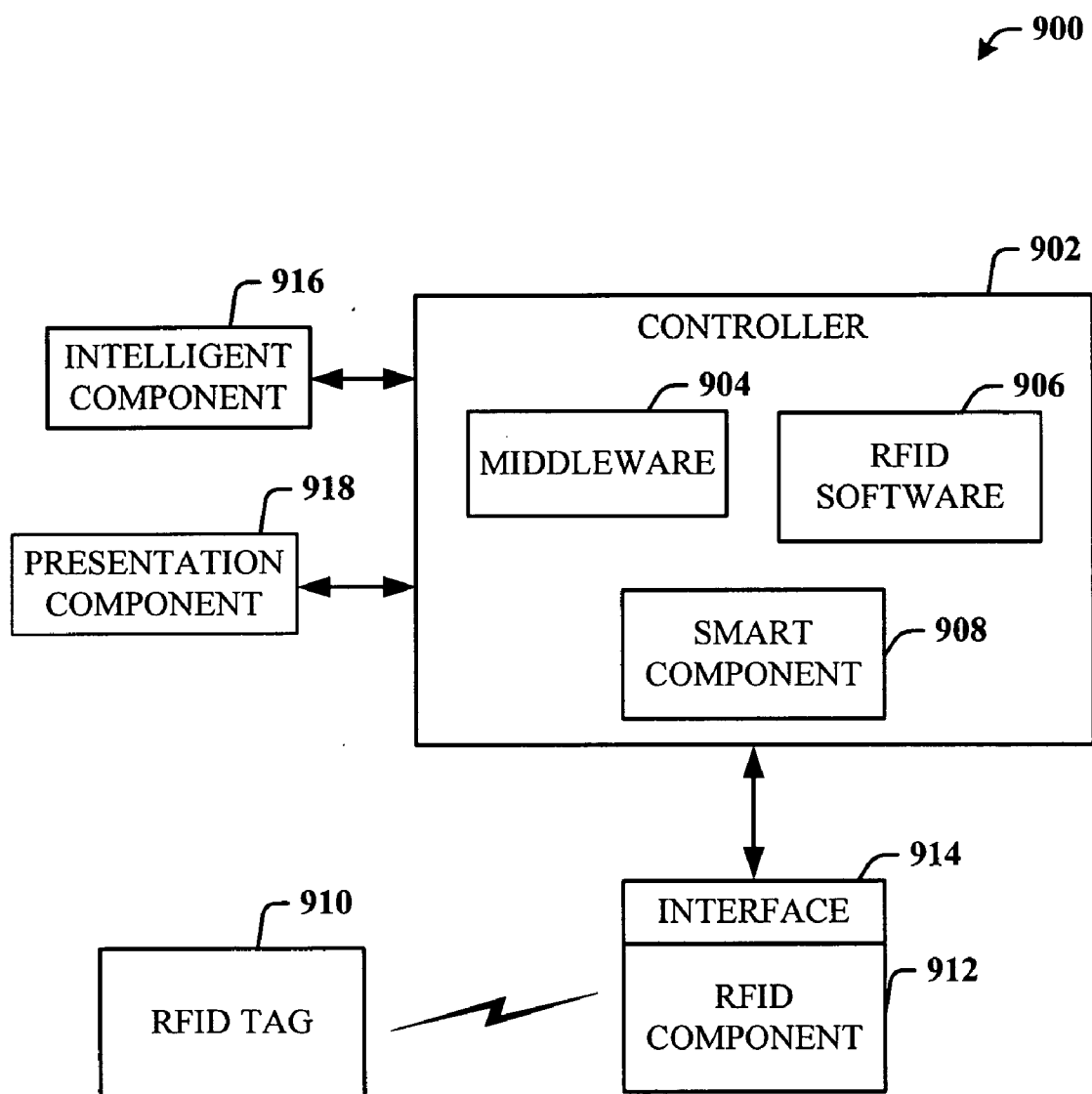


FIG. 9

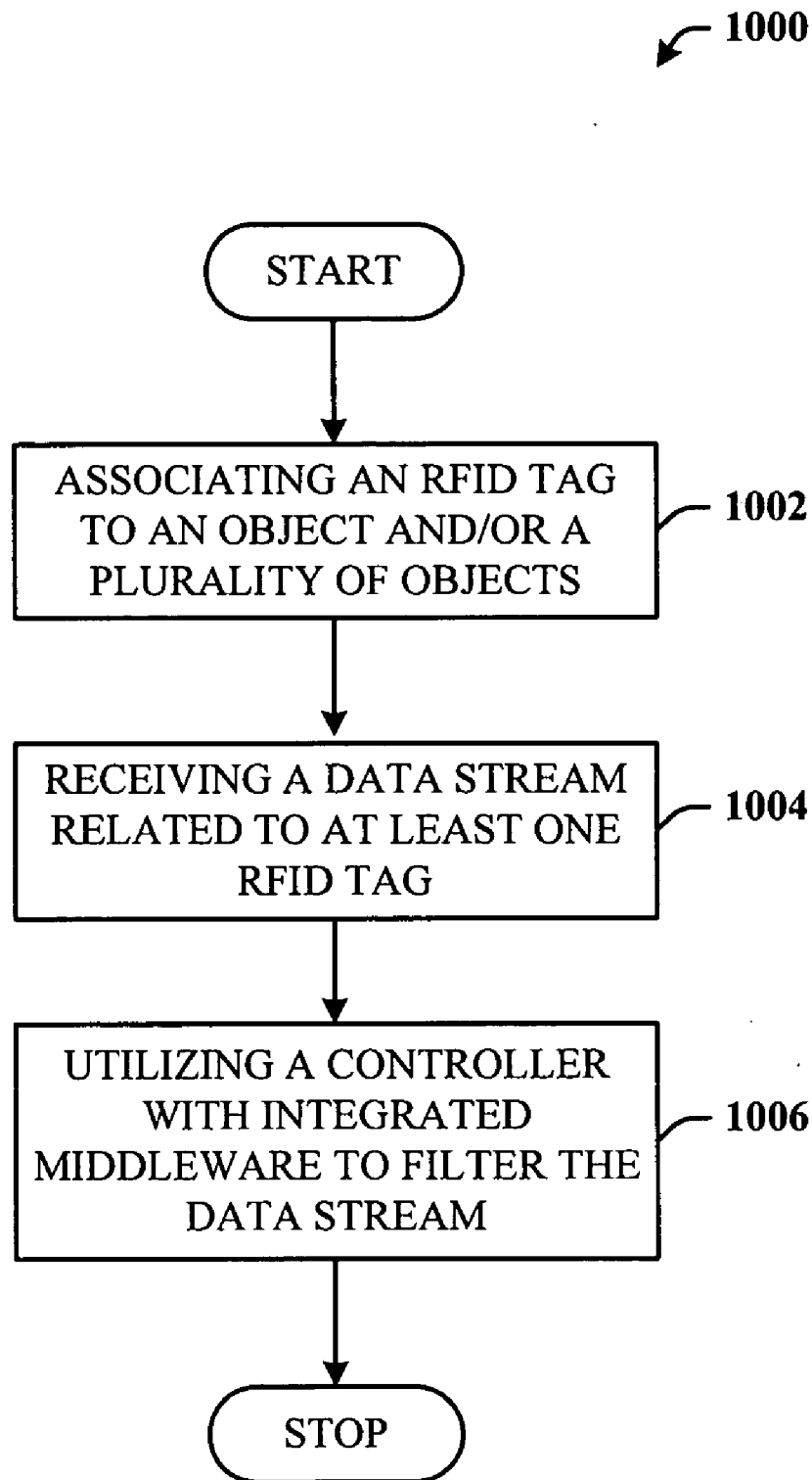


FIG. 10

1100

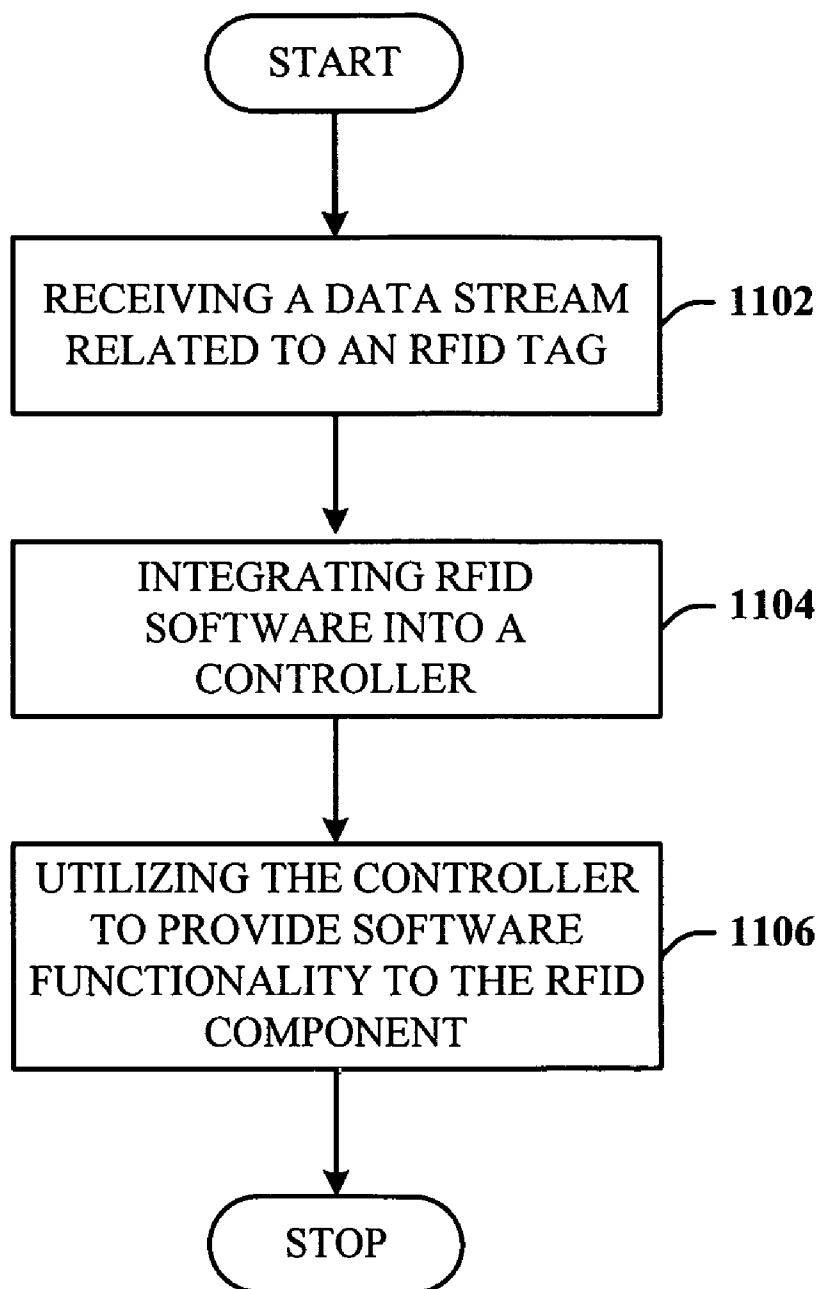


FIG. 11

1200

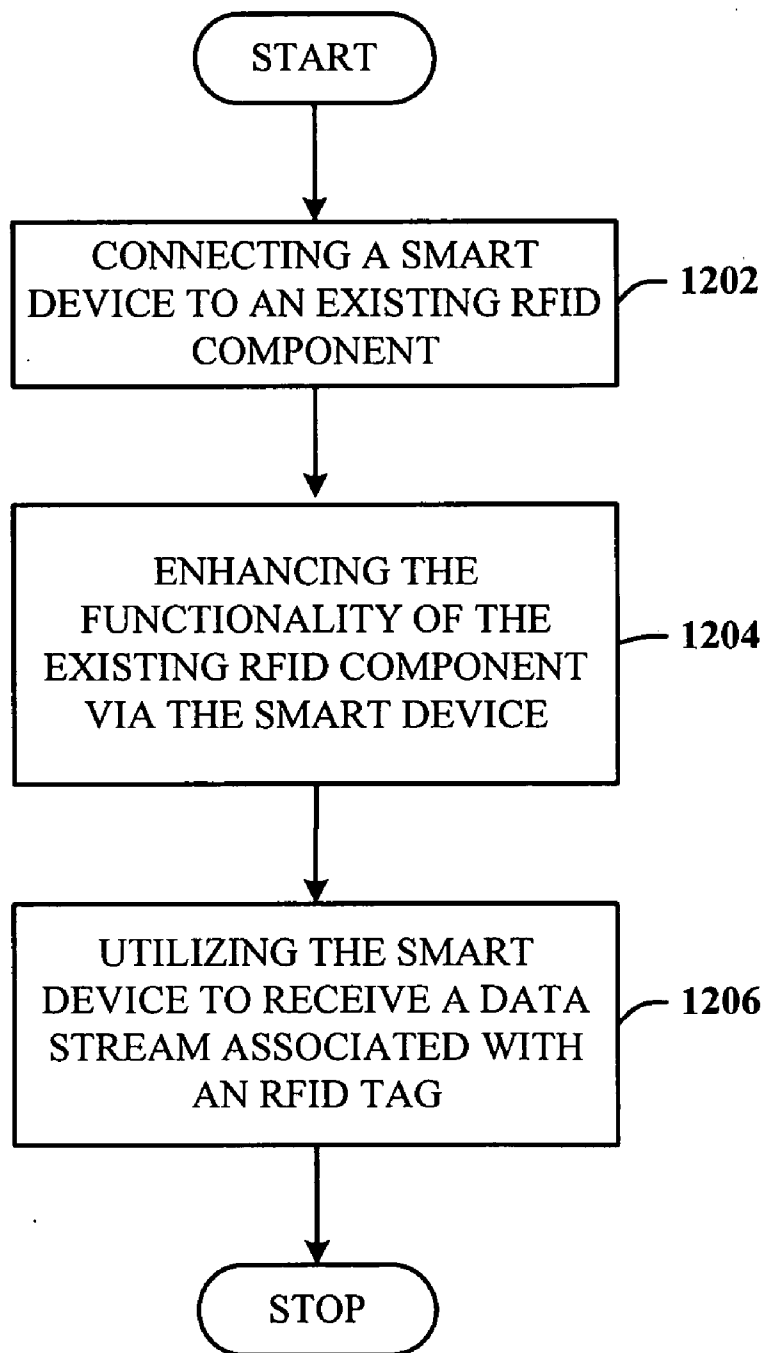
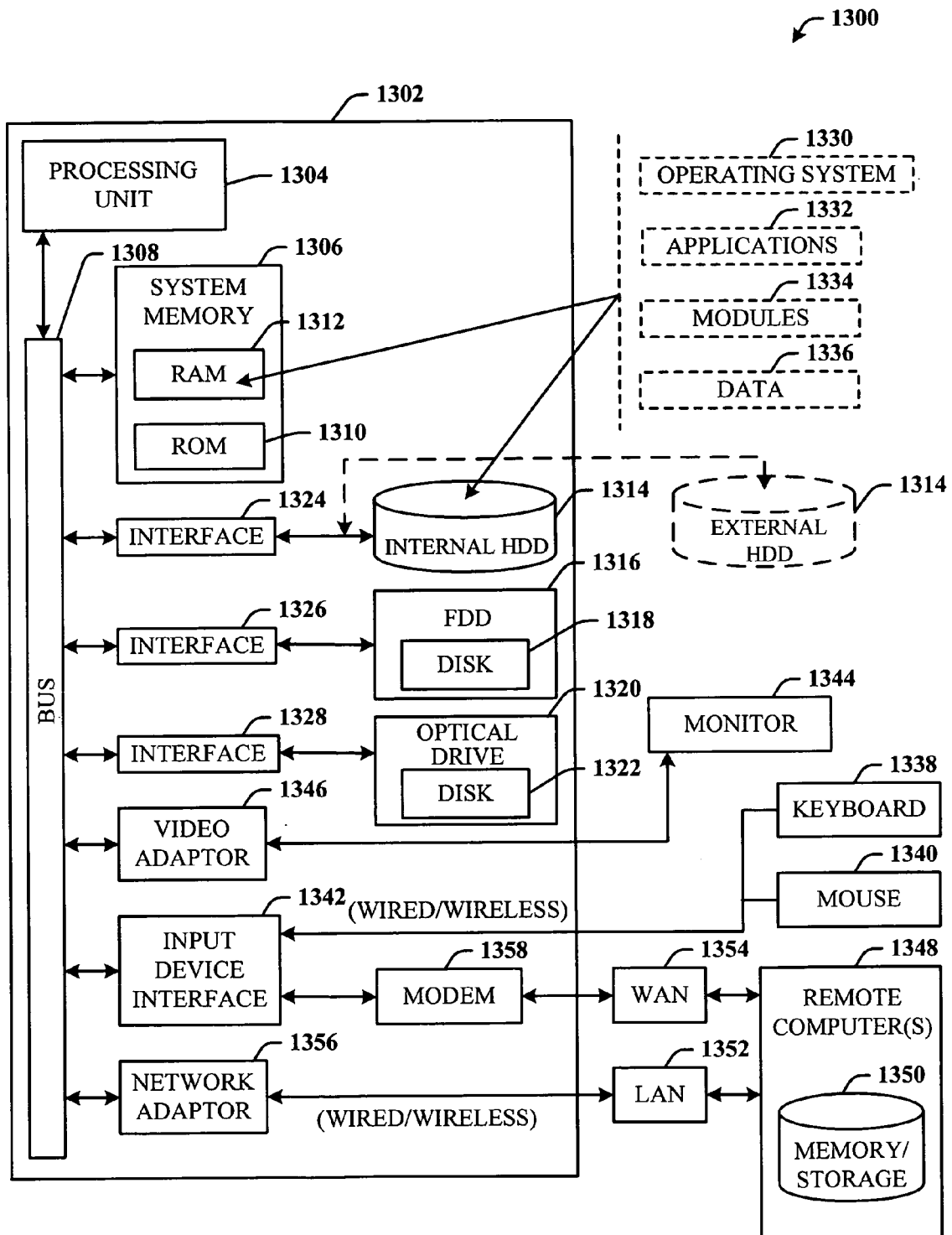


FIG. 12



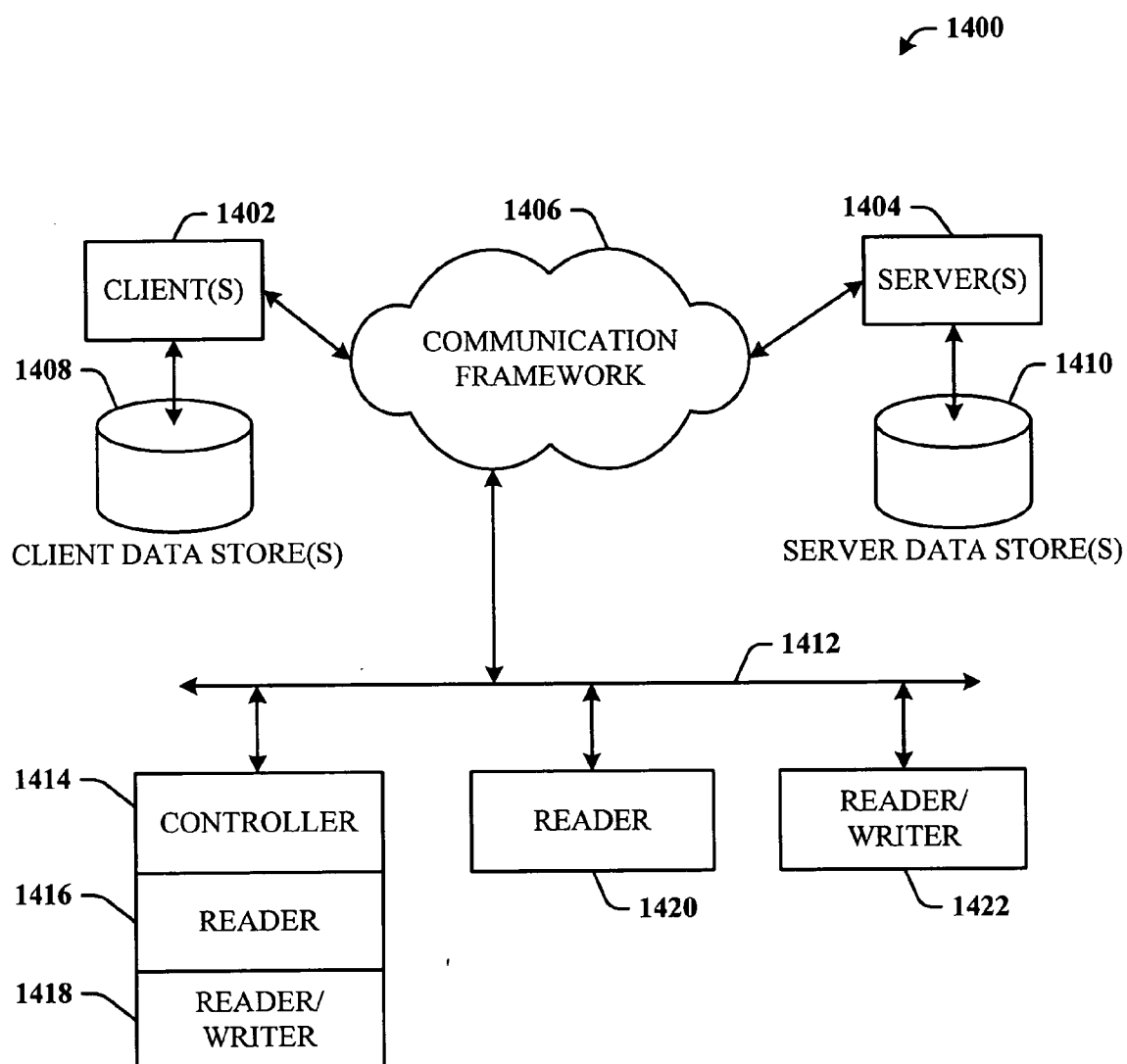


FIG. 14

ENHANCED CONTROLLER UTILIZING RFID TECHNOLOGY

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The claimed subject matter is related to RFID technology, and more specifically to RFID tags utilized within an industrial automation system.

BACKGROUND

[0002] An evolving technology that is rapidly gaining interest is Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), which leverages electronic data to mitigate data reading (e.g., scanning bar codes) and/or opening containers to obtain product information. RFID technology leverages electronic data and wireless communications for identification purposes. With RFID systems, electronic data typically is stored within an RFID tag, which can be formed from a small silicon chip and one or more antennas and affixed to a product. Reading from and/or writing to an RFID tag can be achieved through radio frequency (RF) based wireless communication via devices referred to as RFID readers. An RFID reader is a device that can be utilized to read and/or write RFID tag data, depending on read/write privileges.

[0003] In general, writing is utilized to add and/or modify product-specific information to an RFID tag, and reading is utilized to retrieve the information, for example, to provide for automatic product identification. In many instances, the electronic data written to and/or read from an RFID tag includes an Electronic Product Code (EPC), as well as other product-related data. The EPC, in general, is a unique number that is encoded (e.g., as a bit code) and embedded within the RFID tag (a small silicon chip with one or more antennas) affixed to an associated product. Typical EPC data can include information about the associated product (e.g., product type, date of manufacture, lot number, source data, destination data, unique product code, . . .) and/or associated pallets, boxes, cases and/or container levels, for example.

[0004] In today's highly sophisticated, complex and intelligent industrial automation systems, RFID technology is becoming an increasingly important presence for logistics concerns, material handling and inventory management. Simply knowing that an object exists in a large warehouse is no longer sufficient. When implementing an RFID solution in a distribution center or a factory, it is customary to utilize three distinct platforms: an RFID reader/antenna (e.g., a fixed implementation), RFID "middleware" software running on a standard PC (Personal Computer), and an industrial controller (e.g., a PLC—Programmable Logic Controller). A traditional communications approach is to have the RFID reader connect to the controller via a network using, for example, RS-232 serial communications, Ethernet, or any of the field buses such as DeviceNet, ControlNet, etc. Thus, data read from the RFID tag can be utilized to provide a greater degree of certainty over what goes into a supply chain and how to manage raw materials, warehouse inventory, shipments, logistics, and/or various other aspects of manufacturing.

[0005] In general, an RFID system can include multiple components: tags, tag readers (e.g., tag transceivers), tag writers, tag-programming stations, circulation readers, sorting equipment, tag inventory wands, etc. Moreover, various makes, models, types, and/or applications can be associated

with respective components (e.g., tag, tag readers, tag programming stations, circulation readers, sorting equipment, tag inventory wands, . . .), which can complicate compatibility within the RFID system and automation systems. In view of the above, there is a need to provide a uniform way to incorporate various makes, models, types, and/or applications into disparate automation system utilizing RFID technology.

SUMMARY

[0006] The following presents a simplified summary of the innovation in order to provide a basic understanding of some aspects described herein. This summary is not an extensive overview of the claimed subject matter. It is intended to neither identify key or critical elements of the claimed subject matter nor delineate the scope of the subject innovation. Its sole purpose is to present some concepts of the claimed subject matter in a simplified form as a prelude to the more detailed description that is presented later.

[0007] The subject innovation relates to systems and/or methods that facilitate utilizing RFID technology with automation systems and/or applications. An RFID component can transfer a data stream from an RFID tag via wireless communication, wherein the RFID tag can include data associated with a particular object and/or item (not shown). The RFID tag can be either an active RFID tag or a passive RFID tag. The RFID component can be, but is not limited to, various components that read, write, receive, and/or store electronic product data, such as, readers, readers/writers, writers and/or servers, and can be a handheld device or a fixed-mount device depending on the particular application. A controller can utilize the data stream associated with the RFID component. The controller can contain software components and hardware components having inputs and/or outputs that can be utilized in connection with automating an industrial manufacturing device and/or process.

[0008] Moreover, the controller can integrate and/or embed middleware that can filter the data stream associated with the RFID component, wherein such filtering can extract relevant information from such data. With the integration of middleware into the controller, the controller can provide a seamless implementation of a portion of a plurality of disparate RFID components. For instance, the controller with integrated middleware can provide at least one of human machine interfacing, programming, configuration, sharing of data streams, data stream regulation, and/or employment of at least one sensor associated with the controller. In addition, the middleware can provide clock synchronization between at least the controller and the RFID component.

[0009] In accordance with one aspect of the claimed subject matter, the controller can integrate and/or embed RFID software to facilitate providing software functionality to the RFID component. The RFID software can incorporate at least one of demodulation, decoding, and/or conversion of data streams into the controller. Moreover, by incorporating the RFID software into the controller, the RFID software is implemented in a more industrial hardened platform and/or environment.

[0010] In accordance with another aspect of the claimed subject matter, the controller can integrate a smart component that connects to an existing RFID component to provide

enhanced functionality thereto. The smart component can provide additional analog and/or digital inputs and/or outputs. Moreover, the smart component can employ additional capabilities such as, but not limited to networking and location determination. The smart component can be, for instance, a micro PLC and/or a controller that provides a common programming language between at least a portion of a plurality of disparate RFID components. In other aspects of the claimed subject matter, methods are provided that facilitate utilizing RFID technology and a controller to provide efficient and/or optimized utilization of RFID components.

[0011] The following description and the annexed drawings set forth in detail certain illustrative aspects of the claimed subject matter. These aspects are indicative, however, of but a few of the various ways in which the principles of the innovation may be employed and the claimed subject matter is intended to include all such aspects and their equivalents. Other advantages and novel features of the claimed subject matter will become apparent from the following detailed description of the innovation when considered in conjunction with the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of an exemplary system that facilitates utilizing RFID technology with a controller.

[0013] FIG. 2 illustrates a block diagram of an exemplary system that facilitates implementing seamless integration of a plurality of disparate RFID components via a single controller.

[0014] FIG. 3 illustrates a block diagram of an exemplary system that facilitates enhancing an RFID component utilizing a controller.

[0015] FIG. 4 illustrates a block diagram of an exemplary system that facilitates integrating middleware with a controller to provide seamless integration with a plurality of disparate RFID components.

[0016] FIG. 5 illustrates a block diagram of an exemplary system that facilitates automatically providing RFID component functionality via software to a plurality of disparate RFID components.

[0017] FIG. 6 illustrates a block diagram of an exemplary system that facilitates enhancing an RFID component with a controller.

[0018] FIG. 7 illustrates an application of an RFID system in accordance with at least one aspect of the claimed subject matter.

[0019] FIG. 8 illustrates a block diagram of an RFID system having a plurality of stations that interact with a plurality of objects having respective RFID tags.

[0020] FIG. 9 illustrates a block diagram of an exemplary system that facilitates utilizing RFID technology with a controller.

[0021] FIG. 10 illustrates a methodology for integrating middleware into a controller to provide efficient filtering of a data stream.

[0022] FIG. 11 illustrates a methodology that facilitates integrating RFID software into a controller.

[0023] FIG. 12 illustrates a methodology for connecting a smart device to an existing RFID component.

[0024] FIG. 13 illustrates a block diagram of a computer operable to execute the disclosed architecture.

[0025] FIG. 14 illustrates a schematic block diagram of an exemplary computing environment in accordance with the claimed subject matter.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0026] As utilized herein, terms “component,” “system,” “interface,” and the like are intended to refer to a computer-related entity, either hardware, software (e.g., in execution), and/or firmware. For example, a component can be a process running on a processor, a processor, an object, an executable, a program, and/or a computer. By way of illustration, both an application running on a server and the server can be a component. One or more components can reside within a process and a component can be localized on one computer and/or distributed between two or more computers.

[0027] The claimed subject matter is described with reference to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals are used to refer to like elements throughout. In the following description, for purposes of explanation, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the subject innovation. It may be evident, however, that the claimed subject matter may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known structures and devices are shown in block diagram form in order to facilitate describing the subject innovation.

[0028] Now turning to the figures, FIG. 1 illustrates a system 100 that facilitates utilizing RFID technology with a controller. An RFID component 104 can transfer a data stream from an RFID tag 102 via wireless communication, wherein the RFID tag 102 can include data associated with a particular object and/or item (not shown). Moreover, the RFID tag 102 can be either an active RFID tag or a passive RFID tag. The RFID component 104 can be, but is not limited to, various components that read, write, receive, and/or store electronic product data, such as, readers, readers/writers, writers and/or servers, and can be a handheld device or a fixed-mount device depending on the particular application. A controller 106 can utilize the data stream associated with the RFID component 104. The controller 106 can contain software components and hardware components having inputs and/or outputs that can be utilized in connection with automating an industrial manufacturing device and/or process.

[0029] Furthermore, the controller 106 can include integrated middleware 108 that eliminates any need for a computer and/or personal computer (PC) to host any suitable middleware software associated with the RFID component 104. By integrating the middleware 108 into the controller 106 provides an efficient, inexpensive, and industrial hardened solution in comparison with conventional techniques. The middleware 108 can filter the data stream associated with the RFID component 104, wherein such filtering can extract relevant information from such data. The middleware 108 can further provide the efficient implementation of the RFID component 104 based at least in part upon infor-

mation included with the controller **106**. In addition, the middleware **108** can orchestrate the sharing of information from multiple RFID components related to a plurality of RFID tags. For instance, the middleware **108** can provide any suitable format to data streams associated with disparate RFID components **104**. Thus, based at least in part upon the controller **106** having integrated middleware **108**, disparate RFID components **104** regardless of brand, type, make, etc. can seamlessly be utilized by such controller **106** and middleware **108**.

[0030] For instance, the middleware **108** can be software that filters a data stream from an RFID reader, wherein such middleware **108** is integrated into the controller **106** to provide at least one of the elimination of a separate computer to host such software; and the accessibility to various information from the controller **106** such as the location of the reader (e.g., factory, warehouse, . . .). In one example, the controller **106** can utilize various sensors, wherein cases (having RFID tags) on a conveyor belt can be located utilizing one of the sensors. The sensor data can indicate the location of particular case on the conveyor belt and such information (contained in the controller **106**) can contribute to the middleware **108** filtering of the data streams. By utilizing the information related to the controller **106** in conjunction with the integrated middleware **108**, the RFID component **104** can be effectively and/or efficiently implemented to receive data streams from RFID tags.

[0031] In another example, the controller **106** can integrate RFID software that can provide software functionality to the RFID component **104** (discussed in more detail infra). The software functionality can include demodulating functions, decoding functions, conversion functions associated with the data stream collected by the RFID component **104**. Moreover, the controller **106** can include a smart component (not shown) that connects to the RFID component **104** to provide enhanced functionality including, for instance, various inputs, outputs, programming language, network capabilities, location information, etc.

[0032] FIG. 2 illustrates a system **200** that facilitates implementing seamless integration of a plurality of disparate RFID components via a single controller. An RFID tag **202** can include data, wherein an RFID component **204** can receive the data stream via wireless communication. The data stream can be utilized by a controller **206**, wherein the controller **206** integrates middleware **208**. The middleware **208** within the controller **206** provides 1) the elimination of a separate computer to host middleware that filters data and extracts relevant information from the data stream; and 2) contributes to the filtering of the data stream utilizing information associated with the system **200**. It is to be appreciated that the RFID tag **202**, RFID component **204**, controller **206**, and middleware **208** can be substantially similar to the RFID tag **102**, RFID component **104**, controller **106**, and middleware **108** of FIG. 1 respectively.

[0033] For example, the controller **206** with integrated middleware **208** optimizes the utilization of any RFID component **204** that receives a data stream from the RFID tag **202**. The middleware **208** can provide various filtering techniques and/or software that allow the data streams to be cleansed (e.g., extracting relevant information from the data stream). Moreover, with the integration of the middleware **208** into the controller **206**, the information included with

the controller **206** can be utilized to determine collection of data streams from the RFID component **204**. It is to be appreciated that the integration of the middleware **208** into the controller **206** can further provide configuration, visualization, and/or information sharing for a plurality of disparate RFID components.

[0034] The controller **206** can further include RFID software **210** that can facilitate enhancing the functionality of the RFID component **204**. The RFID software **210** within the controller **206** can include demodulation, decoding, conversion techniques suitable to be employed on the data stream associated with the RFID component **204**. Moreover, the implementation of the RFID software **210** in the controller **206** can provide an industrial hardened platform. By integrating the RFID software **210** into the controller **206**, there is a reduction in additional physical infrastructure on a plant and/or warehouse floor.

[0035] For example, a plurality of RFID readers can be located on a plant floor, wherein conventionally the individual RFID readers would respectively be responsible for demodulating, decoding, and/or converting the data stream received which can be inefficient. Yet, the controller **206** with the integrated RFID software **210** alleviates this problem by pulling the software functionality from the RFID readers into the controller **206** which is considered an industrially hardened platform. Thus, the plant floor infrastructure can be reduced and improved based at least in part upon the consolidation of the RFID software **210** into the controller **206**.

[0036] FIG. 3 illustrates a system **300** that facilitates enhancing an RFID component utilizing a controller. An RFID component **304** can interact via wireless communication with an RFID tag **302**, wherein the RFID component **304** can receive a data stream associated therewith. The RFID component **304** can further utilize an interface **306** to provide the data stream to a controller **308**. The controller **308** can integrate middleware **310** that provides at least the filtering of the data stream associated with the RFID component **304**. Furthermore, the controller can include integrated RFID software **312** that can invoke software functionality for any RFID component **304** regardless of make, model, brand, etc. It is to be appreciated that the RFID tag **302**, RFID component **304**, controller **308**, middleware **310**, and RFID software **312** can be substantially similar to components, tags, controllers, middleware, and RFID software described in previous figures.

[0037] Moreover, the system **300** can include any suitable and/or necessary interface component **306**, which provides various adapters, connectors, channels, communication paths, etc. to integrate the RFID component **304** into virtually any operating and/or database system(s). In addition, the interface component **306** can provide various adapters, connectors, channels, communication paths, etc., that provide for interaction with the RFID component **304**, the controller **308**, and any components and/or data associated therewith.

[0038] The controller **308** further includes a smart component **314** that can connect to the RFID component **304** to provide enhanced functionality. Although the smart component **314** is depicted as an internal component in relation to the controller **308**, it is to be appreciated that the smart component **314** can be incorporated into the controller **308**, a stand-alone component, a combination thereof, and/or the

controller 308. In other words, the smart component 314 can be a controller substantially similar to the controller 308 in order to provide the described enhanced functionality.

[0039] The smart component 314 can connect to the RFID component 304, wherein configuration and/or user information can be received. The smart component 314 can connect to the RFID component 304 utilizing, for instance, an existing interface. Moreover, the smart component 314 can provide programmability, inputs, outputs, networking capabilities, location capabilities, program languages, etc. It is to be appreciated that the smart component 314 can provide an enhanced and/or increased functionality in regards to the RFID component 304 before connection of such smart component 314.

[0040] FIG. 4 illustrates a system 400 that facilitates integrating middleware with a controller to provide seamless integration with a plurality of disparate RFID components. RFID tags 402, 404, and 406 can relate to a specific good, article, object, item, pallet, box, etc. and communicate via wireless communication to at least one of the RFID components 408, 410, and 412. It is to be appreciated that various brands, makes, and/or models of RFID tags 402, 404, and 406 and RFID components 408, 410, and 412 exist and any suitable RFID tag and RFID component can be utilized in accordance with the claimed subject matter. For instance, RFID tag 402 can be an active RFID tag, while RFID tag 404 and 406 can be passive RFID tags. Moreover, the RFID component 408 can be a reader of brand X, while RFID component 410 is a reader/writer of brand Z and RFID component 412 is a writer of brand Y.

[0041] A controller 414 can receive data streams associated with the RFID components 408, 410, and 412. It is to be appreciated and understood that the controller 414 can contain software components and hardware components having inputs and/or outputs that can be utilized in connection with automating an industrial manufacturing device and/or process. The controller 414 can be common to a plurality of RFID components (408, 410, and 412) in various locations. Moreover, the controller 414 can integrate middleware 416 to provide at least 1) the elimination of a designated host for middleware software associated with the RFID components 408, 410, and 412; and 2) the controller 414 to contribute to the filtering of the data streams. The middleware 416 can orchestrate the sharing of information among a plurality of RFID components 408, 410, and 412. For instance, the middleware 416 can compare signal strengths associated with various RFID readers when one object is within range of such RFID readers.

[0042] The middleware 414 can include a filter master 418 that can interface with a plurality of disparate RFID components 408, 410, and 412. Although three RFID components are depicted in FIG. 4, it is to be understood that any number of RFID components can be utilized in accordance with the subject innovation. The filter master 418 can provide common filtering software adapted to disparate RFID components 408, 410, and 412. The filter master 418 can utilize various filtering techniques and/or any suitable filtering mechanisms in conjunction with the RFID components 408, 410, and 412.

[0043] The middleware 416 can further include a configure component 420 that can provide configuration of the plurality of disparate RFID components 408, 410, and 412.

The configure component 420 can be any suitable configuration associated with implementing RFID components over, for example, a network such as Ethernet to the controller 414. For instance, the configure component 420 can provide a universal programming for various RFID components in various locations. Moreover, the configure component 420 can facilitate integrating RFID components into the controller 414 with middleware 416 by providing at least one of configuration, programming, and human machine interface (HMI). In other words, the configure component 420 can provide a universal configuration and visualization environment to set up RFID components 408, 410, and 412 connected to the controller 414.

[0044] The controller 414 with integrated middleware 416 can also include a data flow manager 422. The data flow manager 422 can monitor and/or provide limitations in relation to the number of bytes sent from at least one RFID component in a transaction. For instance, the bytes of data can be from tag by tag, an array, etc. In another example, the RFID component can be informed that controller data (e.g., data streams associated with a particular RFID component or a portion of RFID components) is available, wherein the data flow manager 422 can specify the size of packets that it is to receive.

[0045] The middleware 416 can include controller software 424 that enables the controller 414 to interact with the system 400. The controller software can be utilized to infer the type of package, object, and/or item associated with an RFID tag that communicated with the RFID components 408, 410, and 412. For example, the controller 414 can receive data from a plurality of sensors 428, wherein there can be 1 to N sensors, with N being an integer greater than or equal to 1. The controller software 424 can be implemented to interact with the filter master 418 to enhance the filtering of the data streams. For instance, when communicating with the middleware 416 for collecting RFID tag data, the controller 414 can utilize a data buffer to accommodate multi-byte, asynchronous data transfer with the middleware 416.

[0046] In one example, the plurality of sensors 428 can be connected to the controller 414 to provide the controller 414 information associated with a package, item, object (e.g., any object associated with an RFID tag) location in relation to an RFID component. The controller 414 can then activate and/or de-activate RFID components based at least in part upon the plurality of sensors 428 and respective data. In other words, by utilizing the controller 414 and related sensors 428, the amount of erroneous and/or unnecessary data reads from the RFID components 408, 410, and 412 is minimized.

[0047] The controller 414 with integrated middleware 416 can further include a clock sync component 426 that invokes clock synchronization between any components associated with the system 400. In particular, the clock sync component 426 can synchronize the clock associated with the controller 414 with the clock associated with the RFID components 408, 410, and 412. By synchronizing the clocks within the system 400, complete synchronization is enabled to facilitate tracking, diagnostics, efficiency, etc. Moreover, the RFID components can share real-time data such as signal strengths, time stamps, etc.

[0048] The following example is one illustration on the possible implementation of the claimed subject matter. It is

to be appreciated that the following is an example, and the subject innovation is not to be so limited. The middleware **416** can be hosted in a plug-in module in the controller **414** backplane. In another instance, the middleware can utilize an open socket associated with a network (e.g., Ethernet, . . .). The module can provide an Ethernet interface to the RFID component and a computing engine for the middleware **416**. The controller **414** can communicate over the backplane, dedicated network, and/or the open socket with the middleware **416** to enhance the filtering capability with information about the tagged object.

[0049] FIG. 5 illustrates a system **500** that facilitates automatically providing RFID component functionality via software to a plurality of disparate RFID components. A plurality of RFID tags **502** can transfer data streams via wireless communication to a plurality of RFID components **504**. There can be 1 to N RFID tags, where N is an integer greater or equal to 1. Similarly, there can be 1 to M RFID components, where M is an integer greater or equal to 1. The data streams associated with the RFID components **504** can be received by a controller **506** that includes integrated RFID software **508**. It is to be appreciated that the controller **506** and the RFID software **508** can be substantially similar to the controller and RFID software previously described above.

[0050] The RFID software **508** can include hardware reader functions embodied into the controller as, for instance, code. The RFID software **508** can provide software functionality that conventionally exists inside at least one RFID component, wherein such software functionality can be pulled into the controller **506** to enable an industrially hardened platform. By integrating the RFID software **508** into the controller **506**, infrastructure can be reduced, RFID component collisions (e.g., reads, writes, reads/writes, . . .) and tag collisions are reduced. Moreover, the RFID software **508** enables an aggregate and/or distributed control of the plurality of RFID components **504** utilizing a single interface.

[0051] Additionally, the RFID software **508** can include at least one of a demodulate component **510** and a decode component **512**. The demodulate component **510** can provide various demodulation techniques that can be implemented with the system **500** and/or data streams associated with the plurality of RFID components **504**. The decode component **512** can provide various decoding techniques that can be utilized in association with the data streams related to the plurality of RFID tags **502**. It is to be appreciated that the demodulate component **510** and/or the decode component **512** can provide any suitable conversion technique associated with analog signal to binary information and vice-versa.

[0052] FIG. 6 illustrates a system **600** that facilitates enhancing an RFID component with a controller. An RFID tag **602** can communicate through wireless communication to an RFID component **604**, wherein such data associated therewith can be received to a controller **606**. The controller **606** can integrate a smart component **608** that can connect to the RFID component **604** to provide enhanced functionality. The smart component **608** can further provide a universal programming for the RFID component **604** utilizing, for instance, a common programming language. In one example, the smart component **608** can communicate via a

serial port, an open socket associated with an Ethernet port, and/or an Ethernet port. For instance, the smart component **606** and/or controller **606** can open an Ethernet port to access the data stream associated with the RFID component **604**. In addition, the smart component **608** can provide universal connection to a plurality of disparate RFID components regardless of the communication protocol utilized by the particular RFID component **604**.

[0053] The smart component **608** can further enhance the RFID component **604** by providing at least one additional output **610** and/or additional input **612**. For instance, the smart component **608** can provide digital and/or analog inputs and/or outputs. Such input **612** and/or output **610** can be utilized with an application to trigger or set points of external devices such as, for instance, tower lights, etc. An analog input **612** and/or an analog output **610** can be utilized to change the RFID component **604** configuration (e.g., antenna reading strength, . . .). Furthermore, the smart component **608** can provide a location component **614** that can add location information to the system **600** by utilizing, for instance, any location sensor (e.g., global positioning system (GPS), . . .). Additionally, the smart component **608** can provide a network component **616** that provides additional networking capabilities to the user such as, but not limited to, Ethernet/IP, Modbus/TCP, ProfiNet, etc.

[0054] The following example is one illustration on the possible implementation of the claimed subject matter. It is to be appreciated that the following is an example, and the subject innovation is not to be so limited. The smart component **608** can connect to an existing RFID component **604** utilizing the serial, open socket, and/or Ethernet port to communicate with the RFID component's micro processor. The RFID component **604** can be configured and receive user information accordingly. The communication protocol employed over the connection to the RFID component **604** can be previously defined by, for example, the RFID component manufacturer. By utilizing the smart component **608** to connect to an existing RFID component **604**, the combination can be referred to as a micro controller and/or PLC that provides a common programming language.

[0055] FIG. 7 illustrates an application of an RFID system **700** in accordance with at least one aspect of the claimed subject matter. While FIG. 7 illustrates products being moved by a conveyor belt system **702**, it will be appreciated that the claimed subject matter works equally well in other applications such as a forklifts, trucks, line, manual movement of goods, etc. A plurality of RFID R/W devices (a first reader **704**, and a second reader **706**) are employed to detect the presence of a plurality of RFID tags. While the RFID devices (**704** and **706**) are shown as overhead devices, it should be understood that the devices can be located anywhere, provided the range of coverage is appropriate for the particular purpose. For example, the devices (**704** and **706**) can be underneath, on the side and or in various locations throughout the environment. Each of the RFID R/W devices (**704** and **706**) transmits respective signals (**710** and **712**) that can be constant, intermittent, or periodically transmitted, such as when activated by a sensor device.

[0056] As a pallet of products **708** is moved (e.g., by a conveyor belt system **702** or other suitable means), the products move within the read range of the second RFID R/W reader **706**. RFID tags associated with respective

products, a few of which are illustrated at 714, are activated by the corresponding emitted signal 712, and respond via respective return signals 716 communicated to the second RFID R/W device 706. As the conveyor belt system 702 and associated pallet of products 708 move through the environment, the products enter the range of the first RFID R/W device 704, and the associated return signals will be transmitted in a similar manner. As the pallet of products 708 is moving, the RFID tags are constantly activated (for passive devices) and providing information concerning at least one parameter associated with the RFID R/W device (e.g., signal strength, origin, . . .) and/or operating conditions.

[0057] A controller can be utilized such that the integration of at least one of middleware that filters the data stream associated with the RFID component; RFID software that provides RFID component software functionality; and a smart device that connects to the RFID component can provide a universal controller adapted to any RFID component regardless of make, model, and/or brand. For instance, the controller with integrated middleware can eliminate a separate computer and/or PC for the filtering software and allow the controller and various information associated therewith (e.g., sensor information, . . .) to contribute to filtering of such data streams received from the device 704 and 706. Moreover, the controller can integrate RFID software that can pull demodulating and/or decoding techniques into the controller rather than in the devices 704 and 706. The controller can also utilize a smart component to enhance the ability of the devices 704 and 706.

[0058] FIG. 8 illustrates a block diagram of an RFID system 800 having a plurality of stations that interact with a plurality of objects having respective RFID tags. When an RFID component 802 (e.g., an RFID reader) reads RFID tags, a read signal is broadcast from the RFID component 802 that energizes and/or causes to be received RFID tag data from all tags in a given range thereof. Thus, the RFID component 802 can receive data from a large number of tags for which data is not desired. Not only does this impose additional processing requirements on the RFID component 802, but it can also negatively impact network bandwidth between the RFID component 802 and a remote system.

[0059] The system can also include a network 810 on which is disposed a controller 814 that can integrate at least one of middleware 804, RFID software 806, and/or a smart component 808. It is to be appreciated that the controller 814, middleware 804, RFID software 806, and smart component 808 can be substantially similar to components and/or elements described in previous figures. Moreover, the controller 814 (e.g., a PLC) can also be disposed on the network 810 in control of an automated process such as moving product down an assembly line. The controller 814 can utilize a data store 812 to store any suitable information and/or data associated with the system 800. A transceiver 816 provides wireless network communications between the network 810 and the RFID component 802 such that location data and tag data can be communicated to the controller 814.

[0060] Illustrated are objects 818 (denoted OBJECT₁, OBJECT₂, and OBJECT₃) and associated RFID tags (denoted RFID TAG₁, RFID TAG₂, and RFID TAG₃) in respective stations (STATION A, STATION B, AND STATION C). The user desires to read a tag 820 of a first object

822 in station A, yet receives in addition thereto data from a second tag 824 of a second object 826 in station B and a third tag 828 of a third object 830 in a station C. The location system 806 can facilitate the determination of location data of the reader 802 such that in this example, the user is determined to be closer to station A.

[0061] It can already be known from prior tag scans and/or user input information, for example, that the first object 822 is associated with station A, the second object 826 is associated with station B, and the third object 830 is associated with station C. Accordingly, any other tag data received by the reader 802 indicating that the tag (824 and 828) is associated with an object that is not in station A can be filtered without further processing. Similarly, as the user moves the mobile reader that contains the RFID component 802 closer to station B, the tag data that is received from object tags in station A and station C can be filtered out from further consideration.

[0062] FIG. 9 illustrates a system 900 that facilitates utilizing RFID technology with a controller. The system 900 can employ intelligence to facilitate utilizing a controller 902 with RFID technology to enhance RFID component functionality and controller functionality. The controller 902 can be integrated and/or embedded with integrated middleware 904, RFID software 906, and/or a smart component 908. The system 900 can include the controller 902 with integrated middleware 904, RFID software 906, and/or a smart component 908, an RFID tag 910, an RFID component 912, and an interface 914 that can all be substantially similar to respective components, middleware, software, controllers, and tags described in previous figures. The system 900 further includes an intelligent component 916. The intelligent component 916 can be utilized by the controller 902 to facilitate implementation of the RFID tag data within an automation system and/or process. For example, the intelligent component 916 can infer the operation and/or mechanisms to be instantiated upon an object associated with the RFID tag 910, filtering signals, location, etc.

[0063] It is to be understood that the intelligent component 916 can provide for reasoning about or infer states of the system, environment, and/or user from a set of observations as captured via events and/or data. Inference can be employed to identify a specific context or action, or can generate a probability distribution over states, for example. The inference can be probabilistic—that is, the computation of a probability distribution over states of interest based on a consideration of data and events. Inference can also refer to techniques employed for composing higher-level events from a set of events and/or data. Such inference results in the construction of new events or actions from a set of observed events and/or stored event data, whether or not the events are correlated in close temporal proximity, and whether the events and data come from one or several event and data sources. Various classification (explicitly and/or implicitly trained) schemes and/or systems (e.g., support vector machines, neural networks, expert systems, Bayesian belief networks, fuzzy logic, data fusion engines . . .) can be employed in connection with performing automatic and/or inferred action in connection with the claimed subject matter.

[0064] A classifier is a function that maps an input attribute vector, $x=(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_n)$, to a confidence that

the input belongs to a class, that is, $f(x)=\text{confidence}(\text{class})$. Such classification can employ a probabilistic and/or statistical-based analysis (e.g., factoring into the analysis utilities and costs) to prognose or infer an action that a user desires to be automatically performed. A support vector machine (SVM) is an example of a classifier that can be employed. The SVM operates by finding a hypersurface in the space of possible inputs, which hypersurface attempts to split the triggering criteria from the non-triggering events. Intuitively, this makes the classification correct for testing data that is near, but not identical to training data. Other directed and undirected model classification approaches include, e.g., naive Bayes, Bayesian networks, decision trees, neural networks, fuzzy logic models, and probabilistic classification models providing different patterns of independence can be employed. Classification as used herein also is inclusive of statistical regression that is utilized to develop models of priority.

[0065] A presentation component **918** can provide various types of user interfaces to facilitate interaction between a user and any component associated with the system **900**. As depicted, the presentation component **918** is a separate entity that can be utilized with the controller **902**. However, it is to be appreciated that the presentation component **918** and/or similar view components can be incorporated into the controller **902** and/or a stand-alone unit. The presentation component **918** can provide one or more graphical user interfaces (GUIs), command line interfaces, and the like. For example, a GUI can be rendered that provides a user with a region or means to load, import, read, etc., data, and can include a region to present the results of such. These regions can comprise known text and/or graphic regions comprising dialogue boxes, static controls, drop-down-menus, list boxes, pop-up menus, as edit controls, combo boxes, radio buttons, check boxes, push buttons, and graphic boxes. In addition, utilities to facilitate the presentation such vertical and/or horizontal scroll bars for navigation and toolbar buttons to determine whether a region will be viewable can be employed. For example, the user can interact with one or more of the components coupled to the controller **902**.

[0066] The user can also interact with the regions to select and provide information via various devices such as a mouse, a roller ball, a keypad, a keyboard, a pen and/or voice activation, for example. Typically, a mechanism such as a push button or the enter key on the keyboard can be employed subsequent entering the information in order to initiate the search. However, it is to be appreciated that the claimed subject matter is not so limited. For example, merely highlighting a check box can initiate information conveyance. In another example, a command line interface can be employed. For example, the command line interface can prompt (e.g., via a text message on a display and an audio tone) the user for information via providing a text message. The user can then provide suitable information, such as alpha-numeric input corresponding to an option provided in the interface prompt or an answer to a question posed in the prompt. It is to be appreciated that the command line interface can be employed in connection with a GUI and/or API. In addition, the command line interface can be employed in connection with hardware (e.g., video cards) and/or displays (e.g., black and white, and EGA) with limited graphic support, and/or low bandwidth communication channels.

[0067] FIGS. **10-12** illustrate methodologies in accordance with the claimed subject matter. For simplicity of explanation, the methodologies are depicted and described as a series of acts. It is to be understood and appreciated that the subject innovation is not limited by the acts illustrated and/or by the order of acts, for example acts can occur in various orders and/or concurrently, and with other acts not presented and described herein. Furthermore, not all illustrated acts may be required to implement the methodologies in accordance with the claimed subject matter. In addition, those skilled in the art will understand and appreciate that the methodologies could alternatively be represented as a series of interrelated states via a state diagram or events.

[0068] FIG. **10** illustrates a methodology **1000** for integrating middleware into a controller to provide efficient filtering of a data stream. At reference numeral **1002**, an RFID tag can be associated with an object, item, box, pallet, good, any suitable entity related to an automation process and/or object. In addition, the RFID tag can be related to a portion of the objects, items, boxes, etc. The RFID tag can transfer data via wireless communications to at least one RFID component. Moreover, the RFID tag can be either an active RFID tag or a passive RFID tag. The RFID component can be, but is not limited to, various components that read, write, receive, and/or store electronic product data, such as, readers, readers/writers, writers and/or servers, and can be a handheld device or a fixed-mount device depending on the particular application. At reference numeral **1004**, a data stream related to at least one RFID tag is received by the RFID component. It is to be appreciated that the data stream can be specific to a particular RFID tag, and/or a plurality of data streams can be received from a plurality of RFID tags.

[0069] At reference numeral **1006**, a controller with integrated middleware can be utilized to filter the data stream received. It is to be appreciated that the controller can contain software components and hardware components having inputs and/or outputs that can be utilized in connection with automating an industrial manufacturing device and/or process. By integrating the middleware associated with the RFID components, the controller can be efficient by eliminating the need for a separate computer to host the middleware and by allowing the controller to contribute to filtering by utilizing at least a portion of data from the controller and/or sensors associated therewith. In other words, the controller can have integrated filtering software that can filter the data streams associated with the RFID components to provide an efficient and enhanced controller for automation systems and/or processes.

[0070] The integration of middleware into the controller can provide improved functionality. For instance, the following can be provided by the controller with integrated middleware: 1) sharing of information from disparate RFID components; 2) seamless configuration through a single controller for disparate RFID components; 3) utilization of sensor data related to object and/or item location to optimize implementation of RFID components; 4) monitoring and/or managing data stream size receipt to the controller; 5) common HMI environment; and 6) clock synchronization to provide controller, system, and RFID component synchronization.

[0071] FIG. **11** illustrates a methodology **1100** that facilitates integrating RFID software into a controller. At refer-

ence numeral **1102**, a data stream related to an RFID tag can be received by a controller via an RFID component. The RFID tag can be associated with an object and/or item involved with an automation process and/or application. The RFID tag can be either an active RFID tag or a passive RFID tag. Additionally, the RFID component can be, but is not limited to, various components that read, write, receive, and/or store electronic product data, such as, readers, readers/writers, writers and/or servers, and can be a handheld device or a fixed-mount device depending on the particular application.

[**0072**] At reference numeral **1104**, RFID software can be integrated and/or embedded into a controller. The controller can contain software components and hardware components having inputs and/or outputs that can be utilized in connection with automating an industrial manufacturing device and/or process. Any software functionality that typically exists in an RFID component can be embedded into the controller. The RFID software can relate to, but is not limited to, demodulating, decoding, converting (e.g., analog signal to binary information and vice-versa). At reference numeral **1106**, the controller with embedded RFID software is utilized. By integrating the RFID software into the controller, the controller plus RFID software is a more industrially hardened platform. Furthermore, such integration reduces the need for additional infrastructure on a plant and/or warehouse floor, addresses read collision problems, tag collision problems, and enables aggregate and/or distributed control of RFID components within the system via a single interface.

[**0073**] FIG. **12** illustrates a methodology **1200** for connecting a smart device to an existing RFID component. At reference numeral **1202**, a smart device can be connected to an existing RFID component. The RFID component can be, but is not limited to, various components that read, write, receive, and/or store electronic product data, such as, readers, readers/writers, writers and/or servers, and can be a handheld device or a fixed-mount device depending on the particular application. The smart device can be, but is not limited to, a micro PLC, a controller, any suitable device that provides a common programming language to a user. The smart device can connect to the existing RFID component by utilizing any pre-existing interface such as a serial port, an Ethernet port, etc.

[**0074**] At reference numeral **1204**, the functionality of the existing RFID component is enhanced and/or improved. For instance, the smart device can provide additional inputs, outputs, wherein the inputs and/or outputs can be at least one of digital and analog. Furthermore, the smart device can allow additional sensors to be utilized with the RFID component, such that location information can be employed. Additionally, the smart device can provide additional networking capabilities. At reference numeral **1206**, the smart device coupled with the existing RFID component can be utilized to receive at least one data stream associated with an RFID tag.

[**0075**] In order to provide additional context for implementing various aspects of the claimed subject matter, FIGS. **13-14** and the following discussion is intended to provide a brief, general description of a suitable computing environment in which the various aspects of the subject innovation may be implemented. While the claimed subject matter has

been described above in the general context of computer-executable instructions of a computer program that runs on a local computer and/or remote computer, those skilled in the art will recognize that the subject innovation also may be implemented in combination with other program modules. Generally, program modules include routines, programs, components, data structures, etc., that perform particular tasks and/or implement particular abstract data types.

[**0076**] Moreover, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the inventive methods may be practiced with other computer system configurations, including single-processor or multi-processor computer systems, minicomputers, main-frame computers, as well as personal computers, hand-held computing devices, microprocessor-based and/or program-mable consumer electronics, and the like, each of which may operatively communicate with one or more associated devices. The illustrated aspects of the claimed subject matter may also be practiced in distributed computing environments where certain tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network. However, some, if not all, aspects of the subject innovation may be practiced on stand-alone computers. In a distributed computing environment, program modules may be located in local and/or remote memory storage devices.

[**0077**] A computer typically includes a variety of computer-readable media. Computer-readable media can be any available media that can be accessed by the computer and includes both volatile and non-volatile media, removable and non-removable media. By way of example, and not limitation, computer-readable media can comprise computer storage media and communication media. Computer storage media includes both volatile and non-volatile, removable and non-removable media implemented in any method or technology for storage of information such as computer-readable instructions, data structures, program modules, or other data. Computer storage media includes, but is not limited to, RAM, ROM, EEPROM, flash memory or other memory technology, CD-ROM, digital video disk (DVD) or other optical disk storage, magnetic cassettes, magnetic tape, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other medium which can be used to store the desired information and which can be accessed by the computer.

[**0078**] Communication media typically embodies computer-readable instructions, data structures, program modules, or other data in a modulated data signal such as a carrier wave or other transport mechanism, and includes any information delivery media. The term “modulated data signal” means a signal that has one or more of its characteristics set or changed in such a manner as to encode information in the signal. By way of example, and not limitation, communication media includes wired media such as a wired network or direct-wired connection, and wireless media such as acoustic, RF, infrared and other wireless media. Combinations of the any of the above should also be included within the scope of computer-readable media.

[**0079**] With reference again to FIG. **13**, the exemplary environment **1300** for implementing various aspects of the invention includes a computer **1302**, the computer **1302** including a processing unit **1304**, a system memory **1306** and a system bus **1308**. The system bus **1308** couples system components including, but not limited to, the system memory **1306** to the processing unit **1304**. The processing

unit **1304** can be any of various commercially available processors. Dual microprocessors and other multi-processor architectures may also be employed as the processing unit **1304**.

[0080] The system bus **1308** can be any of several types of bus structure that may further interconnect to a memory bus (with or without a memory controller), a peripheral bus, and a local bus using any of a variety of commercially available bus architectures. The system memory **1306** includes read-only memory (ROM) **1310** and random access memory (RAM) **1312**. A basic input/output system (BIOS) is stored in a non-volatile memory **1310** such as ROM, EPROM, EEPROM, which BIOS contains the basic routines that help to transfer information between elements within the computer **1302**, such as during start-up. The RAM **1312** can also include a high-speed RAM such as static RAM for caching data.

[0081] The computer **1302** further includes an internal hard disk drive (HDD) **1314** (e.g., EIDE, SATA), which internal hard disk drive **1314** may also be configured for external use in a suitable chassis (not shown), a magnetic floppy disk drive (FDD) **1316**, (e.g., to read from or write to a removable diskette **1318**) and an optical disk drive **1320**, (e.g., reading a CD-ROM disk **1322** or, to read from or write to other high capacity optical media such as the DVD). The hard disk drive **1314**, magnetic disk drive **1316**, and optical disk drive **1320** can be connected to the system bus **1308** by a hard disk drive interface **1324**, a magnetic disk drive interface **1326** and an optical drive interface **1328**, respectively. The interface **1324** for external drive implementations includes at least one or both of Universal Serial Bus (USB) and IEEE 1394 interface technologies. Other external drive connection technologies are within contemplation of the subject invention.

[0082] The drives and their associated computer-readable media provide nonvolatile storage of data, data structures, computer-executable instructions, and so forth. For the computer **1302**, the drives and media accommodate the storage of any data in a suitable digital format. Although the description of computer-readable media above refers to a HDD, a removable magnetic diskette, and a removable optical media such as a CD or DVD, it should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that other types of media which are readable by a computer, such as zip drives, magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, cartridges, and the like, may also be used in the exemplary operating environment, and further, that any such media may contain computer-executable instructions for performing the methods of the invention.

[0083] A number of program modules can be stored in the drives and RAM **1312**, including an operating system **1330**, one or more application programs **1332**, other program modules **1334**, and program data **1336**. All or portions of the operating system, applications, modules, and/or data can also be cached in the RAM **1312**. It is appreciated that the invention can be implemented with various commercially available operating systems or combinations of operating systems.

[0084] A user can enter commands and information into the computer **1302** through one or more wired/wireless input devices, e.g., a keyboard **1338** and a pointing device, such as a mouse **1340**. Other input devices (not shown) may include a microphone, an IR remote control, a joystick, a

game pad, a stylus pen, touch screen, or the like. These and other input devices are often connected to the processing unit **1304** through an input device interface **1342** that is coupled to the system bus **1308**, but can be connected by other interfaces, such as a parallel port, an IEEE 1394 serial port, a game port, a USB port, an IR interface, etc.

[0085] A monitor **1344** or other type of display device is also connected to the system bus **1308** via an interface, such as a video adapter **1346**. In addition to the monitor **1344**, a computer typically includes other peripheral output devices (not shown), such as speakers, printers, etc.

[0086] The computer **1302** may operate in a networked environment using logical connections via wired and/or wireless communications to one or more remote computers, such as a remote computer(s) **1348**. The remote computer(s) **1348** can be a workstation, a server computer, a router, a personal computer, portable computer, microprocessor-based entertainment appliance, a peer device, or other common network node, and typically includes many or all of the elements described relative to the computer **1302**, although, for purposes of brevity, only a memory/storage device **1350** is illustrated. The logical connections depicted include wired/wireless connectivity to a local area network (LAN) **1352** and/or larger networks, e.g., a wide area network (WAN) **1354**. Such LAN and WAN networking environments are commonplace in offices and companies, and facilitate enterprise-wide computer networks, such as intranets, all of which may connect to a global communications network, e.g., the Internet.

[0087] When used in a LAN networking environment, the computer **1302** is connected to the local network **1352** through a wired and/or wireless communication network interface or adapter **1356**. The adaptor **1356** may facilitate wired or wireless communication to the LAN **1352**, which may also include a wireless access point disposed thereon for communicating with the wireless adaptor **1356**.

[0088] When used in a WAN networking environment, the computer **1302** can include a modem **1358**, or is connected to a communications server on the WAN **1354**, or has other means for establishing communications over the WAN **1354**, such as by way of the Internet. The modem **1358**, which can be internal or external and a wired or wireless device, is connected to the system bus **1308** via the serial port interface **1342**. In a networked environment, program modules depicted relative to the computer **1302**, or portions thereof, can be stored in the remote memory/storage device **1350**. It will be appreciated that the network connections shown are exemplary and other means of establishing a communications link between the computers can be used.

[0089] The computer **1302** is operable to communicate with any wireless devices or entities operatively disposed in wireless communication, e.g., a printer, scanner, desktop and/or portable computer, portable data assistant, communications satellite, any piece of equipment or location associated with a wirelessly detectable tag (e.g., a kiosk, news stand, restroom), and telephone. This includes at least Wi-Fi and Bluetooth™ wireless technologies. Thus, the communication can be a predefined structure as with a conventional network or simply an ad hoc communication between at least two devices.

[0090] Wi-Fi, or Wireless Fidelity, allows connection to the Internet from a couch at home, a bed in a hotel room, or

a conference room at work, without wires. Wi-Fi is a wireless technology similar to that used in a cell phone that enables such devices, e.g., computers, to send and receive data indoors and out; anywhere within the range of a base station. Wi-Fi networks use radio technologies called IEEE 802.11 (a, b, g, etc.) to provide secure, reliable, fast wireless connectivity. A Wi-Fi network can be used to connect computers to each other, to the Internet, and to wired networks (which use IEEE 802.3 or Ethernet). Wi-Fi networks operate in the unlicensed 2.4 and 5 GHz radio bands, at an 11 Mbps (802.11a) or 54 Mbps (802.11b) data rate, for example, or with products that contain both bands (dual band), so the networks can provide real-world performance similar to the basic 10BaseT wired Ethernet networks used in many offices.

[0091] Referring now to FIG. 14, there is illustrated a schematic block diagram of an exemplary computing environment 1400 in accordance with the subject invention. The system 1400 includes one or more client(s) 1402. The client(s) 1402 can be hardware and/or software (e.g., threads, processes, computing devices). The client(s) 1402 can house cookie(s) and/or associated contextual information by employing the invention, for example.

[0092] The system 1400 also includes one or more server(s) 1404. The server(s) 1404 can also be hardware and/or software (e.g., threads, processes, computing devices). The servers 1404 can house threads to perform transformations by employing the invention, for example. One possible communication between a client 1402 and a server 1404 can be in the form of a data packet adapted to be transmitted between two or more computer processes. The data packet may include a cookie and/or associated contextual information, for example. The system 1400 includes a communication framework 1406 (e.g., a global communication network such as the Internet) that can be employed to facilitate communications between the client(s) 1402 and the server(s) 1404.

[0093] Communications can be facilitated via a wired (including optical fiber) and/or wireless technology. The client(s) 1402 are operatively connected to one or more client data store(s) 1408 that can be employed to store information local to the client(s) 1402 (e.g., cookie(s) and/or associated contextual information). Similarly, the server(s) 1404 are operatively connected to one or more server data store(s) 1410 that can be employed to store information local to the servers 1404.

[0094] The framework 1406 can also include a subnetwork 1412, for example, that can be implemented as in an assembly line environment. The subnetwork 1412 can have disposed thereon as nodes, a controller 1414 (e.g., a PLC) that controls a reader module 1416 and a reader/writer module 1418 both of which can read RFID tags, and the latter of which can write data to the RFID tags. The controller 1414, reader module 1416 and reader/writer module 1418 can be provided in a rack configuration at selected locations. Alternatively or in combination therewith, the subnetwork 1412 can also include a second reader module 1420 as a wired or wireless node (or client) that is positioned (fixed or mobile) to read RFID tags, as needed. Similarly, the subnetwork 1412 can also support a reader/writer module 1422 as a wired and/or wireless client node for reading and writing data and signals to RFID tags that come within a coverage area.

[0095] In addition, while a particular feature of the subject innovation may have been disclosed with respect to only one

of several implementations, such feature may be combined with one or more other features of the other implementations as may be desired and advantageous for any given or particular application. Furthermore, to the extent that the terms “includes,” and “including” and variants thereof are used in either the detailed description or the claims, these terms are intended to be inclusive in a manner similar to the term “comprising.”

What is claimed is:

1. A system that facilitates utilizing radio frequency identification (RFID), comprising:

an RFID component that receives a data stream from at least one RFID tag; and

a controller that integrates at least one of the following:

middleware that filters the data stream associated with the RFID component;

RFID software that provides RFID component software functionality; and

a smart component that connects to the RFID component.

2. The system of claim 1, the RFID component is at least one of an RFID reader, an RFID writer, and an RFID reader/writer.

3. The system of claim 1, the RFID tag is at least one of an active RFID tag and, a passive RFID tag.

4. The system of claim 1, the controller contains at least one of a software component and a hardware component that has at least one of an input and an output utilized with automating at least one of an industrial manufacturing device and a process.

5. The system of claim 1, the middleware further comprises a filter master that implements common filtering software that can be employed by a plurality of disparate RFID components.

6. The system of claim 1, the middleware further comprising a configure component that configures at least one RFID component.

7. The system of claim 6, the configuration includes at least one of programming the RFID component and providing a human machine interface (HMI).

8. The system of claim 1, the middleware utilizes at least one of an Ethernet port, an open socket related to Ethernet, and a serial port to interface to the RFID component.

9. The system of claim 1, the middleware orchestrates sharing information associated with disparate RFID components for data filtering.

10. The system of claim 1, the middleware further comprising a data flow manager that regulates data sent from the RFID component.

11. The system of claim 1, the middleware further comprises controller software that interacts with the middleware to enhance the filtering of data streams.

12. The system of claim 11, the enhancement is the optimization of at least one of turning on the RFID component and turning off the RFID component.

13. The system of claim 11, the enhancement further utilizes a sensor associated with the controller to determine a location of the RFID tag.

14. The system of claim 1, the middleware further comprises a clock sync component that synchronizes a clock associated with at least one of the controller and the RFID component.

15. The system of claim 1, the RFID software further comprises a demodulate component that demodulates the data stream received by the RFID component.

16. The system of claim 1, the RFID software further comprises a decode component that decodes the data stream received by the RFID component.

17. The system of claim 1, the RFID software performs conversion between an analog signal and binary information.

18. The system of claim 1, the RFID software enables an aggregate control of a plurality of disparate RFID components via a single interface on the controller.

19. The system of claim 1, the smart component connects to the RFID component through an existing interface.

20. The system of claim 19, the interface is at least one of a serial port, an Ethernet port, and an open socket associated with the Ethernet port.

21. The system of claim 1, the smart component is a micro programmable logic controller (PLC) that provides a common programming language for a plurality of disparate RFID components.

22. The system of claim 1, the smart component is a controller that contains at least one of a software component and a hardware component that has at least one of an input and an output utilized with automating at least one of an industrial manufacturing device and a process.

23. The system of claim 1, the smart component further comprises at least one of an additional output and additional input that is at least one of digital and analog.

24. The system of claim 1, the smart component further comprises a location component that adds a location capability to the RFID component.

25. The system of claim 24, the location capability is provided by a global positioning system (GPS).

26. The system of claim 1, the smart component further comprises a network component that adds a network capability to the RFID component.

27. The system of claim 26, the network capability is at least one of Ethernet, EtherNet/IP, Modbus/TCP, and Profi-Net.

28. A computer readable medium having stored thereon the components of the system of claim 1.

29. The system of claim 1, further comprising an intelligent component that employs a probabilistic and/or statistical-based analysis to prognose or infer an action to be automatically performed.

30. A controller that facilitates utilizing RFID, comprising at least one of:

a middleware that filters a data stream associated with an RFID component;

an RFID component software that provides at least one of a conversion of the data stream from an analog signal to binary data and binary data to an analog signal; and

a smart device that connects to the RFID component to enhance such RFID component.

31. A computer-implemented method that facilitates utilizing RFID, comprising:

associating an RFID tag to at least one of an object and a portion of a plurality of objects;

receiving a data stream related to at least one RFID tag; and

utilizing a controller with integrated middleware to provide a common filtering of the data stream associated with a portion of disparate RFID components.

32. The method of claim 31, further comprising at least one of configuring, human machine interfacing, programming, sharing data, regulating data, and utilizing a sensor to optimize control of the RFID component.

33. The method of claim 31, further comprising:

integrating RFID software into the controller; and

utilizing the controller with RFID software to provide software functionality to at least one RFID component.

34. The method of claim 33, further comprising at least one of demodulating data, decoding data, and converting data.

35. The method of claim 31, further comprising:

connecting a smart component to an existing RFID component; and

utilizing the smart component with the existing RFID component to receive a data stream related to the RFID tag.

36. The method of claim 35, further comprising at least one of providing an additional input, providing an additional output, providing additional network capability, and providing location capability.

37. The method of claim 31, the RFID component is at least one of an RFID reader, an RFID writer, and an RFID reader/writer.

38. The method of claim 31, the RFID tag is at least one of an active RFID tag and a passive RFID tag.

39. The method of claim 31, the controller contains at least one of a software component and a hardware component that has at least one of an input and an output utilized with automating at least one of an industrial manufacturing device and a process.

40. A data packet that communicates between at least two of an RFID tag, an RFID component, and a controller, the data packet facilitates the method of claim 31.

41. A computer-implemented system that facilitates utilizing RFID, comprising:

means for receiving a data stream from at least one RFID tag; and

means for embedding at least one of the following into a controller:

middleware that filters the data stream associated with the RFID tag;

RFID software that provides RFID component software functionality; and

a smart component that connects to the RFID component.

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